"NONE SO BLIND"

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I don't believe God ever meant the world to be like this, do you?

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"None So Blind"

By

Ethel Deane

"Eyes have they, but they see not."

"And now abideth faith, hope, Love, these three; but the greatest of these is Love."

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Dedicated

To

E. L.

"Those friends thou hast, and their adoption tried,
Grapple them to thy soul with hoops of steel."

—SHAKESPEARE.

PREFACE

THE following story has been written in the hope that it may be of some help to those who happen to read its pages, and to show the author's gratitude for what Christian Science has done for her. She is not yet a member of a Christian Science Church, but for some time past has studied the subject with care and thought, and has been much impressed by the beauty of its teaching. It seemed to her that there were many people who spoke against Christian Science because they had no knowledge of its real meaning, and that by putting into the form of a story its main principle in simple language, she might at least plead for charity and justice from those who oppose it. She would like to add that during the writing of this story she has been healed of a malady from which she has suffered since she was a

child, and of which numerous doctors have been unable to cure her, so that her debt of gratitude to Christian Science is one that can never be repaid.

I

THE short November afternoon was drawing to a close, and Angela Leslie laid down her brushes with a sigh, and gazed once more at the picture on the easel in front of her.

The canvas was not a large one and represented the corner of a beautiful garden, bathed in hot afternoon sunshine; tall trees threw their shadows across the velvet grass, and bright flowers reared their heads in the sunny borders.

In the front of the picture stood two figures, the one a man in the garb of a monk, the other a girl in a long cloak of deep red. The hood of the cloak had fallen back, and gleams of sunlight played on the soft gold of her hair and the fair transparent beauty of the young face held up towards the man's with an expression of eager pleading. She was leaning

forward with both hands extended in an attitude of supplication, the cloak thrown back over one shoulder revealing the beauty of her figure in its clinging white dress.

On the man's face, which was very pale, was an expression of intense suffering; the dark eyes, sunk back in the worn white face, seemed to burn with a consuming fire, the thin lips were set in a rigid line. It was a face of great beauty and strength, but wasted and worn with much pain. The long thin hands were clasped tightly behind his back as if he feared they would go out against his will to meet the little white ones held out towards him.

Angela gazed at her work and knew that it was good. It was not yet quite finished; she had been working at the folds of the girl's cloak, and there were still a good many touches to be put before it would be complete. With another sigh of satisfaction she dropped her brushes into a jar beside her and turned to stir the fire into a blaze.

The cheerful light lit up the big room, with its polished floor and bright oriental rugs. Except for the easel and the platform before it, on which stood a lay figure draped in red, and for a group of canvases turned to the wall in one corner, there was little of the studio about it. In another corner stood a piano with a pile of music on the floor beside it. To the right of the fireplace was an old oak bureau with a big bookcase filled with books above it. Over the mantelpiece was an old mirror surrounded by shelves on which reposed pieces of choice old china. Big basket chairs with piles of cushions were drawn near the fire, and everywhere there was a profusion of flowers. Copies of famous pictures adorned the walls, which were hung with dark green canvas, giving the whole a wonderfully warm and restful appearance.

On a big couch drawn to one side of the fire lay a girl of about nineteen. Her hands were clasped behind her head, and an open book lay on her lap, but her eyes had ceased to scan

its pages and were bent on the depths of the glowing coals.

As Angela moved forward to poke the fire her companion stirred uneasily and turned her gaze on the artist. Yes, she thought, Angela was very beautiful with her bronze-coloured hair in great coils round her head, and those deep blue eyes with their curling lashes. But there was something about her face that did not suggest perfect happiness; even as she stood gazing into the fire with that dreamy expression on her face there was something restless in the very dream.

Sybil Dalrymple was accustomed to Angela's dreams. She was ten years her junior, and to her Angela was a being almost of another world, though at the same time her dearest friend. Presently she broke the silence.

"Angela," she asked, "what is wrong with the world?"

Angela started slightly, then turned towards the speaker with a little smile as she answered in a low musical voice:

"I don't think there is anything wrong with the world, Sybil; it seems to me that it is the people in it."

Sybil laughed. "Yes, I suppose it is. But how comes it, Angela, that in this so-called Christian country it is possible to meet armies of those dreadful unemployed like we met this morning?"

"Ah! that is one of the greatest problems of the age, my dear, which will take wiser heads than yours and mine to solve."

"Yes, I know that, but there must be something wrong for such a state of things to exist. I don't believe God ever meant the world to be like this, do you?"

Angela hesitated a moment and glanced rather anxiously at the younger girl, but Sybil's eyes were fixed on the ceiling above her with an earnest, intent gaze as if she would read there an answer to the vexing puzzle.

After a slight pause Angela answered slowly as if weighing her words: "No, I

don't think God did mean it to be like this. But what has made you suddenly begin to think of these things?"

"I don't think it is sudden, really," answered the girl, "I've often thought of them since I came home for good, though I have never talked much about it; but I think seeing that crowd of awful people this morning rather brought it home, somehow; it didn't seem right to me that we should be driving about in the carriage if all those people were really out of work and starving. Did that thought occur to you, Angela?"

Angela smiled. "Those thoughts are always occurring to me, dear," she answered slowly; "haven't you heard them teasing me about being a Socialist?"

"But what has that to do with Socialism?" asked Sybil in a puzzled voice.

Angela laughed outright. "What is your idea of Socialism?" she asked.

"Why, Socialists are the people who want everything to be equal, aren't they? All the

money and things, I mean, and to do away with class."

Angela was still laughing. "If that is all they wanted, I don't think anyone would mind," she answered; "they would not make very much difference in the world."

"Why not?"

"Because they would be striving after the impossible, my dear."

"Then what is your idea of Socialism?"

"When I think of Socialism I always put another word before it, Christian, and by that I mean the teaching of the New Testament."

"But there is nothing about Socialism in the Bible," exclaimed Sybil in a surprised tone.

Angela laughed again. "I think there is a great deal," she answered.

"But where? How?"

"Read the Sermon on the Mount; if you follow its teaching you cannot help being a Socialist."

Sybil was silent, gazing into the fire.

"But all Christians are not Socialists," she said presently.

"Perhaps we do not understand the same thing by the term Christian," said Angela, smiling. "I suppose you would say that we, you and I, are Christians, would you not?"

Sybil sat up suddenly. "Why, of course," she exclaimed, "wouldn't you?"

"Well, you see, dear, what I understand by the term is, 'a follower of Christ,' and if I answered you quite truthfully, speaking for myself, I should say, no."

"But Angela——"

"Wait a moment, Sybil, don't misunderstand me; what I want to point out to you is, that though in the eyes of the world, yes, and the church, we should be called Christians, in my own eyes I come far too short of the Example ever to think of myself as one."

Sybil was silent a moment and played uneasily with the book on her lap. "Then you think the church is wrong," she said at last without looking up.

"I think there is something wrong with the church," said Angela gently.

There was another pause; then Sybil turned her head and looked straight at her companion. "Do you think Arthur believes what he preaches?" she asked suddenly.

Angela's face flushed, and she dropped her eyes, the question was so unexpected. "I should be very sorry to doubt his sincerity," she said at last.

There was another long pause. Sybil sank back on the cushions thinking deeply. "I suppose when one comes to think seriously regarding what the Bible teaches as to various questions, very few, comparatively speaking, can be said to follow it exactly," she said at last.

"I am afraid not, though I believe a great many of them think they do."

In the silence that followed an old grandfather clock in the corner chimed out five o'clock, and the sound of a gong echoed through the house. Both girls rose to their

feet, and Sybil, feeling for the knob, switched on the electric light and turned at once to the mirror.

Angela watched the reflection of the pretty childish face, as she divested herself of her painting overall; all thoughtfulness had vanished, she was once more a butterfly, but the woman knew that beneath the pretty exterior there lay a soul, which was struggling somehow to find expression.

II

WHEN the two girls entered the large handsomely furnished drawing-room there were already three occupants of the room. Mrs. Leslie in widow's weeds was seated at the tea-table, and beside her on a low chair sat a much younger woman, so closely resembling her in feature that there was no doubt of their relationship; they were obviously mother and daughter.

On the hearthrug stood a young clergyman, dark and clean-shaven, with that peculiar something in his whole dress and bearing which marks the fashionable high church parson.

"And have you secured him?" he asked of the elder Miss Leslie just as the door opened to admit the two girls.

"Who is this that has to be secured, Ar-

thur?" laughed Angela, holding out her hand. "It sounds like a thief or a burglar."

"By no means, it is the bishop," laughed the young clergyman. "Gertrude has been to see if she can secure him to preach for me at our dedication festival."

"Oh, I see; and is he coming?"

"Yes," answered Miss Leslie, "he says he will be delighted. I was just in time to catch him, the motor was already at the door."

Angela and Sybil exchanged a smile, then Sybil turned to her brother. "Where is the mater this afternoon?" she asked.

"Gone to the bazaar; by the way, I thought you were to go too, and be presented to the Duchess?"

"I believe I was," answered Sybil, laughing, "but I forgot all about it, and when Angela asked me to stay to lunch it never occurred to me that there was any reason why I should not."

A look of annoyance passed over the brother's face. "I wish you would try and remem-

ber your engagements, Sybil," he said severely; "you ought to understand by now how important it is."

"You should think of your mother, my dear," put in Mrs. Leslie in her pleasant well-bred voice.

"Yes, I am sure it would be a change for you if you thought of something else than your frocks occasionally," chimed in Miss Leslie.

A hard, rebellious look came into the childish face, and Sybil was about to answer when Angela's quiet voice spoke:

"When are you coming to visit the studio, Arthur? The picture is nearly finished now, and I think you will like it."

"Ah! I must come and see that; I have been longing for its completion. Do you think you have been able to express your meaning?"

"Yes, I think so, it tells its own story well enough."

"What is this mysterious picture?" asked Miss Leslie. "You have never offered to show it to me, Angela."

"I don't much think you would care for it, Gertrude. It was the result of a conversation I had with Arthur, that is why I wished him to see it."

"Angela is always so mysterious about her pictures," laughed the elder sister, "one would think she was afraid of them being copied or stolen."

Angela coloured hotly, but made no answer, and just then the door opened and a tall boy with bronze hair and blue eyes like Angela's came into the room. Having bent over his mother for a moment with an affectionate caress, he shook hands with the parson, and turning to Sybil drew a chair up beside her and sat down, and in another moment their fresh young laughter echoed through the old room.

Having poured out tea for her son, Mrs. Leslie withdrew to a distance with some needlework, and as Gertrude rose and left the room Arthur sank down on the sofa beside Angela.

"Well! what dreams have you been dreaming this afternoon?" he asked with a smile of affectionate indulgence. "If walls had ears, I wonder what your studio would tell me?"

Angela laughed. "Not much that is edifying, I'm afraid," she answered. Then suddenly she leant forward and glanced round the room. Where they sat they were quite out of hearing of the others if they spoke in low tones. She turned to her companion and said softly:

"Arthur, what is your definition of a Christian?"

The young man also sat up with a surprised expression on his face. "My dear Angela, what a question! Of course there can only be one answer to that,—a follower of Christ."

"A modern Christian, I mean."

"There is no difference in the meaning today; it means what it always has meant. Why should you suppose there is?"

Angela hesitated and gazed dreamily across the big room; then she said slowly: "When

I look round the world to-day, and then go and read the Bible it seems to me that one or the other must be wrong, because they do not agree one bit."

A look of absolute astonishment came into the young man's face, and for a moment he gazed at the girl speechless, then he pulled himself together.

"How do you mean, do not agree?" he asked.

"I was thinking of the Sermon on the Mount. I suppose that embodies the whole of the Christian faith, doesn't it? Well, nobody ever thinks of following out the rules of life laid down there. We are told to take no thought for the things of this life, and yet the whole of our existence is given up to that, and little else. The pursuit of wealth is one of the religions of the age."

"Of course we have all gone very much astray," answered Arthur gravely, "but you are not taking into account the march of civilization; that is where people make such a

mistake; they forget that the Gospel was preached to an eastern people in an eastern language, and that more than nineteen hundred years have passed since then. We are bound to adapt it to the needs of the people of to-day, don't you see?"

"I confess I had not thought much about that," answered Angela. "Do you think St. Paul would go about in a motor-car if he lived in the world to-day?"

A horrified expression crossed Arthur's face. Was she laughing at him? But one glance at Angela showed him there was nothing further from her thoughts; her face was absolutely grave, she was intensely in earnest.

"That is a question I think we need not consider," he answered slowly; "the times have completely changed, and the Christian faith has advanced with the ages as the needs of mankind required it. I thought you were a Christian Socialist, Angela, surely then you understand the need for progress?"

"Of course I know the world must go on,

but I used always to think of Christians as the same yesterday, to-day, and forever; I suppose I was wrong."

"No indeed, you were right. The principles, the foundations, are always the same; it is only the way they are expressed that is different. The church has always remained in spite of everything."

"The church! Ah yes! I know her proud motto, *Quod eadem, quod semper, quod ubique*, but I was not thinking of the church."

"But, my dear Angela, they are the same. You cannot separate Christianity and the church."

"You cannot, perhaps," answered the girl gently, almost sadly, "but with me there is always the question of the—motor-car."

He looked puzzled. "Motor-car? How do you mean?"

"I am always wondering what the apostles would have done in the world of to-day. I cannot help contrasting those simple fishermen with our clergy of to-day. Look at your-

self," she added, with a rather pathetic smile, as for the first time she turned her face to his.

In spite of himself Arthur coloured. Somewhere in the depths of his mind he knew that he did not like to be compared to an illiterate fisherman. Surely he, the brilliant Oxford scholar and one of the most popular young preachers in London, was a far more fitting representative of the church of Christ than it was possible for an illiterate fisherman to be. Not that Arthur was conceited; far from it. He believed all his gifts were given him by God to be used for the good of his fellows, and that he was doing a great and good work in his London parish no one would have denied. He was the last man in the world to have said one word to detract from the glory of those same illiterate fishermen, indeed, with his high church views he looked upon them as saints, and almost worshipped them.

There was a pause before he answered, then he said slowly: "Is it fair to make such com-

parisons? Why will you not realize the meaning of civilization?"

"I sometimes think that our much boasted civilization has been the curse of the world," answered the girl wearily. "Surely the world was never meant to be the miserable place it is?"

"You, calling the world miserable!" exclaimed Arthur incredulously. "I have always thought of you as being one of the happiest people alive."

"That shows how very little we ever really know of each other. Not that I am complaining; if I am ever miserable I am sure that it is my own fault."

Arthur did not reply at once; this phase of the girl's character was new to him. He had only known her as a bright beautiful being in society, or the dreamy, quaint artist of the studio, and in both these characters he loved her; but this new phase was something quite different and wholly unexpected, and filled him with a foreboding of trouble.

"Surely there is no need to be miserable," he said presently in a very gentle, tender voice. "If all these outside questions trouble you so much, would it not be wiser to leave them alone?"

Angela shook her head. "Things that are of vital importance in our life will not be let alone," she answered.

"But are they of vital importance, Angela? Be sure of that before you let yourself be launched on a sea of troubles."

At that moment they were interrupted by Sybil and her companion, who had risen and crossed the room. "Come, Arthur we must be going, we have got to dine at the Morrisons' to-night and it will take me at least an hour to dress."

"Oh! talking of the Morrisons," exclaimed young Bernard Leslie, "that reminds me—who do you think I met to-day?"

"Who?" asked one or two voices.

"That fellow Hugh Rivers. You remember him, don't you, Arthur?"

"Why yes, Harry's friend, he was at Oxford with him. I think that afterwards he was a doctor, was he not?"

"Yes, but he had to give up because of his health," said Angela. "It was consumption, wasn't it? Is he better?"

"Better! my dear, he looks as fit as a flea; he looks a jolly fine specimen of the human race. He was awfully interested about poor old Harry and said he would like to come and see him."

"But I thought the doctors gave him up," said Mrs. Leslie, who had drawn near as the party rose.

"Yes, so did I," said Arthur.

"Well, anyway, they made a mistake," said the boy, laughing. "There is no consumption about him now; he looks A1."

"Dear me, what a blessing," said Mrs. Leslie. "I suppose when he came into all that money he was able to do all the doctors advised. Of course he has the title now, has he not?"

"Yes, I suppose he has. I quite forgot to 'Sir Hugh' him, though."

"It was a curious thing his coming into the property," said Arthur. "It was only through the death of his uncle and cousin that he succeeded. Is he living in London now?"

"Yes, I suppose so. He gave me the address of his club for Harry."

"His people used to live in Russell Square in the old days," said Mrs. Leslie. "We ought to go and call, Angela."

Angela did not answer, and in the pause that followed, Arthur Dalrymple and his sister said good-bye. As he held Angela's hand for a moment he said in a low voice that she alone could hear: "Don't let the motor-cars make you miserable. We will talk of these things again."

III

AFTER the Dalrymples had gone Angela took her way downstairs and knocked gently on a door leading into a room at the back of the house. A man's voice answered her and she turned the handle softly and went in.

The room she entered was long and low and had been built on to the old house some few years previously as a library. The walls were lined on three sides with books, and on the fourth was an immense oak fireplace, built in with ingle nooks and a bricked hearth, in front of which stood an old-fashioned fire-guard surmounted by a velvet cushion. Tables and deep leather chairs were dotted about the room, and movable electric lights stood on the tables.

When Angela entered only one of these was lighted and was placed on a little table beside

a great couch drawn up near the fire, on which a man was reclining.

One glance at the recumbent figure was enough to show where Angela had got the model for the monk in her picture upstairs. It was the same pale face with the burning dark eyes and thin lips, and the same drawn look of suffering was visible in the deep lines round the mouth and eyes.

As his sister entered a bright smile for a moment lit up the invalid's face, and he held a long thin hand towards her. Angela took it in both of hers.

"How goes it?" she asked in a cheery voice.

He shook his head. "It has been a rotten afternoon," he answered, in a deep melancholy voice. "I couldn't stand that fool Andrews messing about. I gave him the sack."

"Oh! Harry!" exclaimed Angela in consternation. "You don't really mean it, do you?"

He laughed at her scared face. "I don't

know whether I mean it or not. I suppose he is better than most of 'em really, but I cursed him so thoroughly I doubt if he'll ever forgive me."

Angela softly approached and dropped on to a low stool beside the sofa, resting her head against her brother's pillows.

"Forgive you? There is not a soul in the house who would not forgive you every crime in the decalogue, you dear old boy, and you know it."

"Yes, I suppose I do; they all pity me so. It is awfully jolly, isn't it?"

"Oh! Harry, don't," said the girl in a pained voice.

"I beg your pardon, Angela, I am a beast. But after one of these bad turns I am like a bear with a sore head. I ought not to let you in when the mood is on, but I cannot bear to say no to you, you have always been such a brick. Why you all put up with me as you do beats me. Why on earth I could not have got killed outright instead of being turned into a

useless log has always been a mystery to me. It would have been so much better," he added with a sigh.

"Would you have minded being killed, Harry?"

"Minded? the chances are I should have known nothing about it, my dear, and I should certainly have been saved untold agony."

"What do you believe happens when we die then?"

"Nothing; it is the end. We are snuffed out for good and all."

"Then you don't believe in immortality?"

"Good heavens, child, you don't want me to believe that I am to live forever in this torture, do you?"

"No, no, not in torture, of course not."

"If not in torture, what do you suppose is going to happen to me, eh? Do you imagine there will be a sort of miracle and that I shall go to sleep here and wake up over there with wings and all that sort of thing?"

"No, I don't think I quite thought that, but

somehow I cannot quite believe that this is the end."

"Can't you? Well, I jolly well hope it is, anyway."

"Would you if all the pain were gone? If you could go back to what you were before the accident, do you think you would want it to end then?"

"We never do go back in this life, you see, and I certainly don't want to go on, so the snuffing out is the only solution for me."

There was a silence. Leslie played with the electric light and turned it out, then the restless fingers strayed to his sister's bronze-coloured hair.

"Well, little woman, don't you like the idea of being snuffed out?" he asked softly.

"Yes, I think I rather do, but if it is all to end when we die, what is the use of it all? That is what puzzles me."

"Ah! ask me another. I wish I knew."

"But we must have been put into the world for some purpose," persisted the girl. "I am

sure we were meant to fulfill a destiny. We cannot have been created for nothing."

"I often think it must have been for sport," answered the man. "Life is so very full of ironies."

"No, I cannot believe that. I believe God made us for a good purpose, and somehow it is our own fault that we do not fulfill it."

"Well, all I can say is, that it is often uncommon hard to find the good purpose. I should be very much obliged to anyone who would tell me what good purpose I serve lying here on this couch, a torture to myself and to all my relatives."

Angela's hand stole up in the dim light and held her brother's.

"Whatever you may say, you have done us all a great deal of good," she answered softly.

"Now don't start any of that rot," was the impatient rejoinder. "You can't make me believe that I was meant to lie here in order that you folks should learn patience. I guess I have taught you all," with a bitter little

laugh, "but I bet I have done more cursing than blessing any day. That stuff won't wash. You remind me of Arthur when you talk like that."

"Do you think Arthur believes what he preaches, Harry?"

Harry laughed. "Good Lord! no—at least —I am not so sure. Yes, now I come to think, I suppose he does believe most of it. Yes, I expect he does. How I used to curse him when he came to see me first of all, with his long face and his yarns of patience and all that rot. Poor old Arthur, he meant well too. Yes, I think he believes it all, all the pretty fairy tales. It is a beautiful old story certainly, and it must be comforting to believe it all. I often wish I could. You do, don't you, little girl?" a trifle anxiously.

"I used to believe it all," answered Angela slowly, "but I am not sure that I do now. I don't fancy I thought much for myself in the old days, but lately, since I have read more and seen more and been about, I have had

doubts; everything seems so contradictory somehow."

"I am sorry," said Harry gently. "I wish I could help you, but I am afraid I cannot. Talk to old Arthur, I expect he can put things right for you; these parson fellows generally can."

"I have been talking to him just now, but he looks at things from such a different point of view, the same word has totally different meanings for him and for me."

Harry smiled at himself in the firelight.

"As, for instance?" he suggested.

"The word Christian. What do you mean by it?"

"It is a word that does not come much into my vocabulary, but it means, I suppose, a follower of Christ."

"Certainly, then would you say there are any now?"

"Oh! yes, I expect so. I don't know any, but I guess there are lots about."

"I wonder."

"Well, little girl, I guess we shall not do much good by wondering. If we make the best of this blessed life I think we shall have done as much as is expected of us, and we shall come out all right in the end. There goes the dressing gong—don't be late, the mater hates it so. Give us a kiss, and, I say, you can tell that fool Andrews, if you see him, that you have exorcised the devil, and that I will forgive him if he likes to stay."

IV

THERE now, miss, I'm sure you look beautiful." It was Esther, the maid, who spoke, as she surveyed Angela, to whose toilette she had just put the finishing touches.

Gertrude and Angela were going to a dinner party, to be followed later by a ball. It was to be rather a grand affair, and both girls were wearing new dresses. In her white satin, with its soft laces and pearl embroidery, Angela did look very beautiful, as she stood before the long glass waiting for the maid to put on her cloak. A call from Gertrude made Esther hurry away, and Angela stood for a moment gazing at the vision before her with that curious dreamy look she so often wore.

The thought that came to her mind was:

"I wonder why I was made like this. Was it for a purpose, or only for sport?" With an impatient gesture she gathered her long cloak about her, and picking up the fan and gloves from the table, turned to go downstairs.

Slowly descending, she took her way to the library, and, in answer to her brother's "Come in," entered. It had long ago been agreed between them that Angela should always come to her brother's room before going out. He was very proud of this lovely sister and liked to see her prettily dressed. It was one of the few joys he had in life now, and often they would spend hours together designing a new frock, for he, too, was something of an artist and had excellent taste.

As she advanced into the room she dropped her long cloak on a chair, and turned round slowly and gravely in front of the invalid couch without speaking.

Harry raised himself on one arm and looked at her critically, turning on an extra electric light the better to view her. After

a few moments he dropped back on the pillows and said in an appreciative tone:

"Yes, you'll do, I knew it would suit you."

Angela laughingly made a curtsey.

"That's all right. I don't feel that I in the least want to go, so I suppose I shall enjoy it very much; that is generally the way; when you want a thing awfully you are generally disappointed when you get it, and vice versa, don't you think so?"

Her brother nodded. "Are Sybil and Arthur going to-night?"

"Yes, we pick them up."

"His reverence doesn't dance, does he?"

"No, he comes to the dinner party, and leaves afterwards, I believe."

Harry laughed. "I wonder how he works that."

"I don't know. Shall I ask him?"

"Better not, might spoil his dinner, poor old chap. Come in," as a knock came at the door.

Bernard came in. "By jove, you look ripping!" exclaimed the boy as his eyes fell on his sister. "You will dance with me, won't you?"

"Rather. I suppose you came to say the carriage is here? Good-night, Harry."

"I wish you were coming, old chap," said Bernard, regretfully.

"I am much too old for such frivolities," laughed his brother. Nevertheless he sighed as the door closed upon them, and gave himself an impatient shake before returning to his book.

In less than half an hour all the young people were assembled in Lady Morrison's drawing-room. As Angela's eyes wandered round the room her gaze was suddenly arrested by a figure that seemed oddly familiar to her, and yet when the man turned his face toward her she did not know it. He was in earnest conversation with a sweet-faced woman whom Angela did not know, and she found herself watching them with a curious

interest, while she made conversation with a fatuous youth who stood beside her.

Presently, as if there had been something magnetic in her glance, the man turned his head towards her. For a second their eyes met, then a light of recognition came into his and he moved a step towards her, but something in her puzzled expression arrested him and he turned and spoke to the woman beside him. She glanced at the girl and shook her head. Then the man's gaze lighted on young Bernard Leslie standing behind Sybil Dalrymple, who was flirting gaily with a nice-looking boy. In another moment he had joined him, and together they crossed the room towards her.

"Angela, you remember Sir Hugh Rivers, don't you?" said the boy, "he thought you had forgotten him."

"I thought it not unlikely," said the man in a pleasant voice. "I find that a great many people have."

"I think they may be pardoned," answered

the girl; "you have altered very much since I last saw you. I congratulate you."

"Thanks. Yes, I don't look like dying now, do I?"

"Indeed, no. I could not at first believe it was you. I thought your face seemed familiar and yet I did not know it."

He laughed, and Angela was struck by the genuineness of the sound.

"I saw how puzzled you looked," he said, "so I thought I had better ask your brother to present me. I knew I could not be mistaken."

There was something in the simple gravity of the tone that prevented the words being a compliment, and Angela felt her cheeks flushing as she asked:

"How long is it since we met?"

"It was five years ago I left England. They all hoped the sea voyage would cure me, or at least prolong my life, but I came back worse than I went. Then they sent me to Davos. I was there on and off for nearly three years, then I went to Italy for twelve

months, and when I came home I was as well as you see me now. When I went away all the doctors signed my death warrant. It was only a matter of time, they said; now they all tell me I am perfectly sound. It is wonderful, isn't it?"

"It is indeed. It seems extraordinary that they should have made such a mistake."

Before he could reply dinner was announced and Angela found that he was to be her partner. They were both pleased and as he gave her his arm he said:

"I am so glad to have met you; in the old days your brother and I were great friends, and I should like to see him again."

"Yes, poor Harry. I suppose Bernard told you that he is quite an invalid."

"So he gave me to understand. I must come and see him, if he will let me. Does he see many friends?"

"No, hardly any. One or two relations and a very few old chums. He says they don't like to see him helpless, and he cannot bear to see them so fit. It is very sad."

"It is very sad. I think there is nothing sadder in the world than all the useless suffering."

"Useless? Do you think all suffering is useless?"

"Can you tell me any good purpose that it serves, Miss Leslie?"

"Yes, it serves to strengthen and deepen character and to awaken sympathy."

"Do you find that always the case? If so, you are lucky; that was not my experience. I am afraid I was a bad invalid. I loathed being ill. I was bad-tempered and miserable and hated the world and everyone and everything in it. If I had not been a coward I should have put an end to myself ages ago."

Angela looked up at him in surprise. "To look at you now I cannot believe that."

"Perhaps not, but it is nevertheless true. From my earliest days I never could understand why there was so much pain in the world. That was why I became a doctor."

"Ah! I had forgotten you were a doctor.

How glad you must be to be able to get to your work again. Are you practicing in London?"

"I gave up my practice five years ago," was the answer.

"You are looking for a place in which to make a fresh start perhaps?" questioned the girl.

"At present I am in town with my mother and sisters," he rejoined, not answering her question.

Angela remembered that he had come into money and a title during the past year or so; perhaps now he had no need to work he would give up altogether. She glanced at his face and something in it that had at first attracted her made her unreasonably anxious to know more about him. Surely anyone who had once been a doctor and had done so much good in the world would not give it up because there was no need of money. It seemed to Angela that was a splendid reason for going on with it and doing a great work. This man with those kind eyes did not look as if he

would give up a noble profession for such a reason. Almost before she was aware of it the question slipped out:

"You have not given up your profession?"

"I am no longer a doctor," was the answer. Then, as he caught the expression of her face, he added, "but I shall hope to be a healer among my fellows."

Angela was silent, pondering his words. She was not sure that she quite understood them. When he spoke again it was on another topic and he skilfully guided the conversation off all personal subjects until dinner was over.

When the men joined the ladies in the drawing-room he made his way at once to the corner where Angela was seated toying with her dance programme.

"You will wonder why I have not asked you for a dance," he said, smiling, "but I am not staying for the ball. I gave up dancing five years ago or more, and I cannot take to it again now. My aunt made me promise to come to dinner rather against my will."

Angela was sorry and said so. "You are still a little nervous of the crowded rooms, perhaps?" she added, sympathetically.

"No, I am thankful to say that is not one of my fears," he answered simply. "I know I am quite cured. Now when may I come to see your brother?"

"This is Tuesday, suppose we say Thursday. If you could come about tea time it is best, as he always tries to get a sleep in the afternoon. If he cannot sleep at night, he can often make it up a little then."

"Very well. I will say good-bye until Thursday, then, and perhaps if I come a little early I may be allowed to take a look into your studio first?"

Angela coloured. "If you would really care to see my pictures I should be pleased to show them to you," she answered.

"That is a bargain, then. Good-night."

Angela held out her hand in silence and raised her eyes to his. What was it in the clear straight gaze, she wondered, that made

her feel that he was in some way different from the men she met every day of her life? In appearance he was just the ordinary good-looking Englishman, with a fine physique and the best of health; but something in the mental atmosphere surrounding him had given the girl a feeling of unusual strength; there was a sense of utter fearlessness and confidence about him. He had, too, an air of quiet self-possession which made her feel that he would be prepared for any emergency, while the brightness of his whole face showed that he was observant and even watchful, yet at the same time there was a curious restfulness about him; he seemed essentially a man of peace.

Often during the rest of the evening while she waltzed through the crowded ball-room the face came back to her; she knew it as the face of a friend, and with an odd feeling of hope in her heart she looked forward to his meeting with her brother.

V

IT was late on the following morning, and Harry Leslie was lying back on his pillow, with white face and closed eyes, recovering from the effort of getting dressed and being moved on to his sofa.

A gentle knock at the door roused him, and he answered impatiently, and somewhat querulously, bidding the visitor enter.

The door opened to admit Sybil, a dainty vision in a pretty morning frock, her childish face aglow from the frosty air, and looking brighter and more sparkling by reason of the soft white furs she wore.

The impatient irritable look passed from Harry Leslie's face when he recognized his visitor, and changed to a welcoming smile; but not before the girl had noticed it.

"I am too early a vistor?" she said in a

questioning tone, while her cheeks took on a deeper hue.

"No, no, it is never too early for you," answered the man, his eyes resting with evident pleasure on the flushed young face. "You don't look as if you had been dancing all night," he added with a laugh.

"I did, though. It was ripping," answered the girl, flinging her furs on to one of the deep chairs, and perching herself on the corner of the high fire-guard. "I should not have been out so early, only Arthur wanted some message brought to your mother, and she told me to come in and see you while I waited for the answer, otherwise I would not have bothered you so early."

"I am glad the mater has so much sense," laughed Harry. "Now tell me all about last night."

The girl started on a lively account of her evening's amusement, telling him who was there, describing the dresses, making fun of her partners, praising the floor and the music.

Harry lay back and listened with a contented smile, watching the play of the mobile features and the merry sparkle of the brown eyes.

He had known Sybil since she was a tiny child, but for years she had been away at school, and only twelve months ago had come home and had her first London season. Harry permitted very few lady visitors to enter his sick room, but this child had always been a privileged visitor. She was so often in the house as Angela's guest that it seemed natural that she should come in and out as it pleased her. No one had ever questioned her right to do what she liked, Harry least of all, for he had found an extraordinary interest in watching the development of this child; her thorough enjoyment of everything had brought pleasure and brightness into his own sad life. She never sympathized with him. She had taken him for granted from the first. It had never occurred to her that her own abundance of life and energy could be a

source of envy to him. Perhaps she had never realized that his life was sad. With her he had always been bright and cheerful. She amused him, and he teased her and laughed at her and joked with her quite as much as his young brother did.

But lately it had seemed to him that there was a new look on the bright face. It often wore a dreamy expression that was a mild reflection of that look he knew so well in Angela. Was Sybil growing up?

As he watched her now laughing and talking he was conscious of a fierce longing to be the man who should awaken this pretty child to a sense of womanhood. But swift on the longing came the certain conviction that it could never be. Other men might love and find their happiness, but no one would care to be tied to a useless log forever. Inadvertently a smothered expression of pain escaped him.

In a moment the girl had ceased her laughing prattle and was standing at his side.

"I have been stupid and thoughtless," she exclaimed. "Why didn't you stop me. You are in pain."

"No, no, it is nothing," he answered, his lips twitching a little. "Please go on talking."

But Sybil stood looking down at him anxiously. "Can't I do anything?" she asked.

Her pretty helplessness was oddly attractive. Harry Leslie smiled up at her. "If you would just move these pillows," he murmured.

He was perfectly comfortable, but the temptation was too great. He was pleased to find how gently and deftly her fingers did his bidding.

"You ought to have been a nurse," he said, smiling, as she returned to her perch on the hearth.

The girl coloured with pleasure. Since her conversation in the studio with Angela some weeks ago it had been borne in upon her that

she was leading a very useless life and the thought had weighed heavily upon her usually gay spirits and was the cause of that dreamy expression that others, besides Harry Leslie, had noticed on her face. She had begun to be grateful to anybody who permitted her to be of use, not just to run messages as she did for Arthur, that only depressed her, but to bring some help to someone through her own act. She had begun to realize that nearly everyone was self absorbed, and the realization had made her long to be different, to be a little less selfish herself. Then, as she looked about her, sympathy had been awakened. For the first time it seemed to her she saw the misery in the world, and with the knowledge came the desire to be able to help, if only a little, to lessen that misery.

Her first thoughts had naturally turned to her brother and his parish; there was her opportunity, but somehow she and Arthur had different ideas about such things; her ways were seldom his, and her first attempts had

been disastrous. She had made Harry roar with laughter at some of her parish experiences.

For some time after Harry had spoken the girl sat gazing silently into the fire. For the first time it had dawned upon her that this man she knew so well really suffered, had been suffering for years, and yet never once had she offered to do anything for him. Vaguely she had been aware that he had a man servant who was also his nurse, and that Angela and Mrs. Leslie did things for him, but to-day was the first time she had ever shaken a pillow for him. Always, always she had come to him full of herself, of her own doings and interests; never for one moment thinking of him, only conscious that he was an excellent listener and always ready to talk to her about herself. What must he think of her really? That she was the most selfish, thoughtless little fool in all the world?

With an impulse to defend herself she turned towards him.

"I am not really a selfish little beast," she said, vehemently.

Leslie had been watching her face as she sat gazing into the fire and some dim idea of what was passing through her mind came to him now as she looked eagerly at him for confirmation of her own words. Dimly he divined that some new feeling had been roused within her and that this first act of kindness she had ever performed for him was in some way connected with it. A very gentle expression came into the man's dark eyes as he looked up at the flushed young face.

"I never thought you were," he said softly.

Sybil looked relieved, but she turned her face back to the fire and shook her head a little sadly.

"It is so hard not to be selfish," she said slowly.

"Selfishness is the privilege of the young," answered Harry.

But the girl shook her head again. "No, it ought not to be. We ought to be taught first

of all that we have to think of others before ourselves. It is so difficult after, when your own self has become quite the most interesting thing in the whole world."

"If it comes to that, we are all selfish—not that I find myself particularly interesting. I am bored to death with the monotony of my own sensations."

"Then you act very well," she rejoined, "for I have never seen you bored."

"Ah! you've only seen one side of me," he answered, with a laugh that did not ring quite true.

"I think until lately I have never seen more than one side of life," she said gravely, "but for the last few weeks I seem to have had my eyes opened."

For some moments neither spoke. Harry was debating in his own mind whether to laugh her mood away and bring her back to her usual irresponsible self, or to treat her seriously. He did not want her to grow up just yet, but that half-grave, half-sad expres-

sion gave the face an attraction that he had never noticed before. As he did not speak she went on again presently:

"One advantage you have had over us is that you have not lived in a rush and hurry all your days; you at least have had time to think."

"A great advantage, truly," was the bitter rejoinder. "Believe me, there are advantages also in living in a whirl."

Sybil glanced at him with unusual sympathy. "Yes, you are quite right," she said, while for the first time her eyes seemed to take in the deep lines of suffering on the face she knew so well. "I wonder if it is true that our thoughts are a force in the world."

"Good Lord! I should hope not," was the quick rejoinder. "I must be a very devil if so."

Sybil looked up in surprise. "You cannot have such evil thoughts," she said.

"My dear child, when you go down into hell you don't come up white, you know. Some of

the black is bound to stick." Then, seeing her puzzled expression, he burst into a laugh. "This is a nice conversation for a sunny morning," he exclaimed. "Don't bother your little head about the rest of the world. You are only young once, enjoy it while you can; troubles come fast enough, there is no need to make 'em."

"I wish it wasn't so hard to understand, though," said the girl. "If one could only see some use in it all."

Harry looked at her in surprise. "Some use? If you want to know the use of it all, Arthur can tell you. Ask him."

Sybil smiled. "I am always asking Arthur, but as I told you before, we always seem to look at things from a different point altogether. He wants me to take everything on faith. I did when I was little, but now I want the reason why. I think he does know, because he is quite sure himself and he is able to convince others, but I don't understand his arguments one bit," with a sigh, "and so

much of it all seems so inconsistent. Do you believe in the Bible?"

Harry flushed. The question was rather sudden. He hesitated a moment, then he said gravely: "No, I'm afraid I don't."

Sybil looked disappointed and rose slowly from her seat, just as a knock came at the door and Angela entered.

She looked surprised at seeing Sybil there. "What! you here, and never so much as put your nose into the studio," she exclaimed reproachfully. "How mean of you."

"I only came to wait for an answer to a note of Arthur's," answered the girl, colouring in spite of herself. "I should think it must be ready now," catching up her furs.

"Well, you need not hurry, anyway," remarked Angela. "Have you been telling Harry all about last night?"

"Yes," answered Harry, who was rather relieved at the interruption just then, "and I hear that Rivers took you in to dinner."

"Yes, and he is coming to-morrow, if you

will have him. He is quite a different person."

"Lucky devil. He will come and insult me with his rude health, having forgotten completely that he was ever ill, I suppose."

"No, I don't think he is like that; somehow, he seemed different from the usual run of men. I fancy you will like him."

"I always liked old Hugh. I'm glad he is fit again. He used to be considered a very clever doctor. Perhaps he could do something for me."

"I don't think he is practising now," answered the girl, remembering her conversation of last night.

"Not practising? Hugh used not to be the sort who would lead an idle life," said her brother.

Angela was of the same opinion, but she only said: "He told me he was no longer a doctor."

"Perhaps he is still a bit afraid of the old enemy. I don't believe they ever get really

cured. They always have to do the open air business to the end of the chapter."

"He looks absolutely well, and said he was quite cured," asserted Angela.

"Did he stay to the dance?"

"No, but I don't think that was his reason."

"Ah! depend upon it, there is still the chance of a relapse unless he takes care, poor chap. Now they have that property, perhaps he will settle down as a country squire and look after the place."

Angela did not answer. Somehow that rôle did not seem to fit the man; she felt sure he would not do that.

In the pause that followed, Mrs. Leslie entered with the note, which she handed to Sybil, saying:

"There you are, my dear; give that to Arthur." Then she turned to her son and held towards him a paper she was carrying. "Have you read that Christian Science case?" she asked. "Another poor wretch

dead simply because they would not send for a doctor in time. It really ought to be treated as murder."

Harry opened the paper with a faint show of interest. "They seem to do a great deal of good though," he remarked pleasantly.

"Good! my dear! they do a great deal of harm. They ought not to be allowed to go on as they do."

"Oh! it is a free country," said Harry, smiling, "and if people like that sort of thing I don't think it matters much if one or two die here and there; it is their own lookout. Besides, what of the other people who die? Who kills them?"

"But, my dear, this sort of thing," tapping the paper, "is murder, cold-blooded murder.

"Then by all means let us read it," said Harry with a laughing glance at Sybil.

"I must go," said the girl, laughing back. "We will leave you to enjoy the murder alone." And linking her arm in Angela's, she drew her from the room.

VI

THE following afternoon Sir Hugh Rivers arrived early, and after having tea with the three ladies in the drawing-room, Angela fulfilled her bargain and took him to the studio.

She found him a sympathetic critic, with a good deal of knowledge of his subject, and they spent a very pleasant half hour among the pictures before Angela took him down to see her brother. Having announced him to the invalid, she quietly withdrew.

The first greetings over, the two old friends were silent looking at each other. Before each one had risen a vision of their last meeting. Hugh Rivers saw again the tall, handsome man with the tanned face and fine figure, who had been the admiration and envy of his early days, while before Harry Leslie's eyes

rose the pale wan face and emaciated frame of the man doomed to death by his fellows—that despairing thing—a hopeless case.

The pleasure and surprise died down in Harry Leslie's eyes and he strove in vain to keep the bitterness and envy out of them. What had he done to be kept here a wretched prisoner, without even the hope of death for years to come, while this man, who had been given but a few years to live, now stood before him in the prime of healthy manhood?

Hugh noted the expression and turned away to find a seat.

"You are surprised at my appearance," he said presently. "I am used to it now, everyone is. I, too, am surprised at yours. I don't think I quite took in what your brother told me."

"Oh! I'm an utter wreck," laughing bitterly.

"How did it happen?"

"An accident in the hunting field. You remember my favourite Firefly? I was riding

him. We went for a big bank with a fence on top, and—well, we didn't clear it. What happened exactly I never knew. When I regained consciousness I was back home, how long after I don't quite know. I was all strapped up, and was told that I had injured my spine and smashed a leg, to say nothing of minor injuries. For months I lay in bed suffering the tortures of the damned. I believe all the specialists in the kingdom came down to see me, and everything that could be done was done. The leg, of course, mended, and after various operations the minor injuries were put right, but the result of the other injury is paralysis. At first they held out hopes of my recovery, but now they say I cannot be cured. But unfortunately, it does not kill, so here I shall lie to the end of the chapter, I suppose, a burden to myself and everyone else. But tell me about yourself. How, in the name of fortune, did you get a new lease of life?"

Hugh was looking earnestly at the man be-

fore him, and instead of answering the question he put another:

"Have the doctors really given you up?"

"Yes, they say I can never be cured now. Cheerful, isn't it?"

Hugh sat silent for a moment as if he were debating some question in his mind. Then he raised his eyes to the other's face.

"Would you really care to hear the story of my recovery?" he asked.

"Yes, I should. But won't you light up first?"

"Thanks, I don't smoke."

"Still have to take care, I suppose?" remarked Harry, lighting a cigarette.

"No, the desire has left me. I could not smoke now, I think."

"Well! now for the miracle, for it certainly is one."

"All right. Let me go back to the beginning. As you know, I had got a most flourishing practice in the north about seven years ago, then gradually my health gave way. At

first they called it a nervous breakdown. Then some specialist discovered the lung was affected, one lung, and very slightly. I was told that if I took it in time I should be cured, so off I went to a sanatorium in Surrey and did open air treatment for six months. At the end of that time I was so much better that I went back to work. Then the same thing happened again. For two years I hung on, and then there was a worse breakdown than before, and the specialist told me that both lungs were badly affected and my only hope was a sea voyage.

"I sold the practice, and my sister and I went off together to South Africa. Out there I was so ill that I came to the conclusion my days were numbered, and I came home hardly expecting to live through the voyage, and took a last farewell of my people. Having done that they packed me off to Davos to prolong my miserable existence at another sanatorium. For two years I hung on to the most awful misery, sometimes better, some-

times worse, most often the latter. My people came out to see me from time to time, until my mother's health gave way with all the worry, then only my younger sister was able to come out to me. What she went through I leave you to imagine. I was apparently dying before her eyes, and was always raging against my fate.

"Then one day, about eighteen months ago now, they came to me and brought me a card saying a gentleman wanted to see me. I could not recall the name, and at first there was some suggestion of sending him away, saying I was too ill to see him. But something prompted me to say I wished to see him, and so they brought him out to me.

"I remember I was lying out on a veranda in a long chair, wrapped in innumerable rugs, and I suppose I appeared like an animated corpse.

"Directly the man appeared I recognized him as an old patient of mine whom, a few years before, I had sent away incurable. The

case had interested me very much; he was a young fellow with a wife and children, and I had thus sought me out. In the conversation out to America, where his wife had relatives who would help her in the event of his death. As I had imagined that he must have been in his grave for some years, you can guess how surprised I was at his sudden appearance before me in apparently the best of health. I was more than a little curious to hear why he had thus sought me out. In the conversation that followed I learned.

"In the first place, he had been to my people in London, and hearing from them of my lost health he had ascertained my whereabouts and followed me out, first to give me the good news of his recovery of health and fortune, and secondly to pay back the money I had given him.

"The moment that we had exchanged greetings, he asked me if I had ever heard of Christian Science. Of course I told him I had and that as a doctor I entirely disapproved of

it. Then he told me of his own extraordinary recovery. You see, I myself had signed his death-warrant and was able to prove that it was a genuine case.

"I was compelled to listen to the tale; how he had met a friend out in America who had lent him the book, "Science and Health, With Key to the Scriptures," by Mrs. Eddy, and how after the first reading he had gone to a Christian Science healer, and after a week's treatment had been absolutely cured. It all sounded like a fairy tale, yet there was the man before my eyes, completely cured. He said he had come all that way to help me, and tell me the good news as a return for what I had done for him. He drew the book from his pocket and when he went he left it with me and I had given him my promise to read it.

"After he had gone I opened the book, more in a spirit of curiosity than with any thought of its being of real use to me. The very first words that caught my eye were, from

a doctor's point of view, extremely interesting, and I made up my mind at any rate to study the book. It would be a new interest, and would keep my thoughts from the more painful subjects of my own misery.

"I started reading the preface, and that night I found myself thinking about God. Before that I had studied all the ologies and theories possible and every form of science, and was a thorough sceptic about all religions. I read a few pages of the book next day, giving it much thought and consideration, and I soon began to grasp their meaning.

"When my friend called next day I commissioned him to send for the book without delay, as I wished for a copy of my own. We had many long talks during the days that followed, and I found that I was growing stronger. At last the book arrived, and my friend left. As day by day I studied the book I found that I had not only discovered a cure for my complaint, but a very beautiful re-

ligion, and made up my mind to give it a fair trial.

"When my sister arrived the following week I announced to her my intention of leaving the Sanatorium at once, giving up all medicine, and going in for Christian Science heart and soul. At first she was dreadfully distressed, but when she realized that it was the last hope of a desperate man she agreed to my plan, which was to go away to a little village I knew of in Italy, where we could be undisturbed, and give ourselves up to the study of this Christian Science.

"In less than a week we left. The doctors were so sure that I must die in any case that they did not raise any objection to my going, and I did not mention Christian Science to them.

"At the end of six months I was perfectly well, as you see me now. The cure had come gradually with the understanding of what Christian Science meant, but it was perfect and complete. For another six months we

stayed away to study further, my sister being by that time as keen as I was myself.

"Some months ago we came home and joined a Christian Science church here in London. My mother and elder sister have also joined, and my mother is once more restored to health. I need hardly add that I have given up materia medica entirely, and the only healing I practice now is that of Christian Science."

VII

FOR some time after Hugh had finished speaking there was silence in the room. Harry Leslie lay back on his pillows and gazed with wistful eyes into space, while Hugh in his turn gazed at Leslie.

At last the former broke the silence.

"It all sounds like some weird fairy tale," he said slowly, "and if you were not sitting there before my eyes I should not believe one word of it, but I saw you an utter wreck in the old days, and that something has changed you there is no doubt, so I suppose I must take your word for it; and God knows I am in too bad a way myself to question the cure of a friend; the evidence of my eyes is sufficient. But how the dickens it is done beats me."

"You made use of an expression just now which answers your question," replied Hugh.

Harry looked puzzled. "What was that?" he asked.

"You said 'God knows.' What exactly did you mean by that?"

"I am afraid it was merely a *façon de parler*," was the answer, accompanied by a smile.

"I suppose you will go so far as to admit there is a God, will you not?" asked Hugh.

"A God? Well, perhaps I should say a First Cause."

"A First Cause, then. Do you admit that the First Cause is good?"

Harry hesitated. "Yes, I must admit that, I suppose," he said at last.

"Very well, then, we start with the admission that there is a First Cause, and that it is good. If it is a First Cause it must be a Creator, and in that case you will also admit omnipotence?"

"Yes, if one admits a Creator one cannot impose limitations, I suppose."

"Quite so. There then you have the Chris-

tian Science God. Not a corporeal being, but a divine Principle, Life, Truth, Love."

"Stop a moment. We seem to be going ahead rather too fast. Are you sure all those terms are synonymous?"

"Yes, they simply refer to one absolute Being or Spirit; they each and all express God, the one divine Principle."

Harry considered a moment. "Yes, I suppose they do," he agreed at last.

"Very well. You admit that God is Life, and that God is Good, and also that He is omnipotent, how then can you admit that there is any other power or principle? That is the basis of all our work. God, divine Principle, Goodness, Truth, Love, Life, all-powerful, therefore the opposite of God, that which is opposed to Him can have no life, no truth, and must be non-existent."

"That sounds perfectly logical, but it takes some thinking out. That, I take it, is what is meant by the phrase 'mind over matter'?"

"What we mean, yes; not what is gener-

ally meant; most people mean the human mind. God is the one true Mind. If Life and Mind are the true reality, then their opposites, matter and death, must be unrealities."

"That all sounds very sensible, but unfortunately we are surrounded by matter and death, my dear fellow, which is uncommonly real. You can't make me believe in their unreality like that. All that is very well in theory, but it does not work out."

"But that is where you make the mistake, it does work out. I have proved it and I know."

"Yes, that is all right, but look here. Here am I lying on this couch. It isn't the slightest use your saying that I'm not really here, because I shouldn't believe it."

"Of course not," said Hugh, laughing. "I should not think of telling you anything so foolish. We cannot run before we walk."

"All the same," said Harry, watching the other closely, "that is what you believe, isn't it?"

"My dear fellow, what I believe is that the real man reflects the one eternal Life and Mind, consequently he cannot be anything but whole and perfect."

"Am I to infer from that that you believe my sufferings are all imaginary?"

"Most certainly not. To your thought they are very real, but believe me, a time will come when you will take a different view, and then you will see what is indeed the truth which makes us whole."

"I assure you nothing would please me better, my dear fellow, but if it is a case of religion I'm afraid it is no go, that sort of thing is not in my line."

"I suppose common sense is in your line, and that you are willing to investigate the subject with an open mind? No one wishes you to believe a single thing that you cannot prove for yourself. We go on the principle that 'these signs shall follow them that believe.' Unless we can demonstrate our Christianity it avails us little."

"There I am with you entirely; that is my great objection to religion; we are asked to believe a wonderful story, full of impossible miracles, which is going to give us a good time in some vague shadowy world to come, and which seems to me to be of very little use in this world, except to the few who are fortunate enough to take everything on trust with a blind faith. That is quite beyond me. Besides, they sometimes preach one thing and live another. I very much prefer your honest infidel."

"And quite right too. If you do not practise what you preach you are hardly likely to convince your followers. I believe nothing that I cannot demonstrate. You have no objection to religion, I imagine, it is only the form in which it is presented to you?"

"Certainly, I have no objection to religion. I believe that religion in some form is necessary to man, but I don't think the religion has yet arrived which is entirely satisfactory."

"So I used to think, but now I have changed my mind."

Harry looked at his companion with curious interest.

"Do you really mean that you believe in this Christian Science as a satisfactory religion?" he asked incredulously.

"Yes, I really believe in it as the most satisfactory religion I have encountered as yet. It is the highest and most reasonable form of religion I have met with, and I have succeeded in proving its worth for myself."

"But, my dear fellow, isn't it a bit absurd to pin your faith to the inventions of an American woman?"

"I find no inventions, but a new, or rather a revived, interpretation of old truths; and I find that all that is stated can be demonstrated by anyone who has the understanding which is necessary."

"And you have this understanding?"

"I have a certain amount of understanding. It was sufficient in my own case to save

me from the doom pronounced upon me by some of the cleverest doctors in England; and sufficient to restore me to this condition of health."

"And is it sufficient to cure me, do you think?"

"It should be, certainly. It would be my own fault if it did not. Christian Science could not fail, it would only be the instrument."

"Could not? You speak positively."

"Because I know that I am right."

"Tell me, suppose I decided to try this Christian Science—treatment do you call it—is it necessary for me to believe in it first?"

"No, it is not belief on the part of the patient that is necessary, but understanding on the part of the healer."

"I see. Are you what is called a healer?"

"Yes, I have had some cases since I joined the church."

"And have you cured them?"

"Christian Science has cured them."

"Are there any conditions that have to be observed on the part of the patient?"

"Only those that are necessary to give it a fair trial. We do not care to take cases when the patient is under medical treatment, though I know of cases where the doctor and Science healer have both been at work. We try as far as possible to have no antagonistic thought working against us."

"Do you mean that if there were people set very much against it, that would hinder the recovery of a patient."

"I don't say it would hinder the recovery, but the healer would have to overcome their antagonistic thought as well as that of his patient, and necessarily his task would be harder. For the sake of the patient one naturally likes to take every possible obstacle out of the way first."

"Yes, I quite understand that. Now in your own case, you didn't mention any healer, did you?"

"No, I was cured by reading the book."

"By reading a book! What book?"

"'Science and Health, With Key to the Scriptures,' by Mrs. Eddy."

"But how on earth could a book cure you, my dear fellow?"

"By giving me a true understanding of life. I learned the truth, and it made me free."

"And this book is a sort of bible, I suppose."

"It is an aid to the spiritual understanding of the Bible, as its name implies, a key to the Scriptures."

"But I thought the Scientists never read the Bible, did not believe in it."

"That is quite wrong. It is the Bible that is our 'Chart of Life.' We read and believe that before everything. Mrs. Eddy's writings are, as I mentioned, a key to the Scriptures, making all that before seemed miraculous and impossible perfectly natural and possible."

"Do you mean that she explains the miracles in the New Testament?"

"Yes, she explains them so that they are

no longer miracles, but natural events. Sickness can be cured in the same way to-day as it was by Christ hundreds of years ago."

"What! she claims to cure by the same power as Christ, she makes herself equal with Him!"

"She does nothing of the kind. Mrs. Eddy sets Jesus before us as the perfect Christian Scientist, and reminds us that we must follow His example and do His works."

"Then you believe in the divinity of Christ?"

"Most assuredly, and we believe in the divinity of man as well. There is only one source of life, that is God, therefore everything of good comes from that source. In proportion as this is realized sickness and sin are overcome."

"It all sounds very splendid, my dear fellow, and I confess I am deeply interested, but I cannot pretend that I have grasped it all as yet. I suppose you have got this book you spoke of?"

Hugh put his hand in his pocket and drew out a small leather-bound volume.

"This is a copy of Science and Health," he said, rising and handing it to Harry.

Harry took the book and opened it with a curious feeling of mystery. If he was to believe the tale he had just heard, this unpretentious little volume, in its limp leather cover, had been the means of restoring health to the man before him. Could it really be true? And if it was true in this case, why not in his own? For a moment a feeling of hope surged up in his heart. Oh! to be well and strong once more. Then it died down again. It was absurd, how could a book, and an American book to boot, work miracles? And yet——

His eyes sought Hugh. There he stood, the picture of health, and when he had last seen him there was no doubt at all that he had looked, at any rate, like a dying man. Of course he could not have been as ill as they had thought, and yet——

He was strangely reluctant to part from the book when presently Hugh held out his hand and remarked that he must be leaving.

"You will come again and have another talk about these things, old fellow, won't you?" he said, unconscious of the eagerness of his tone, as he shook Hugh by the hand.

And Hugh promised to pay him another visit before long and to bring with him another copy of the book to lend his friend.

VIII

FOR a long time after Sir Hugh Rivers left him, Harry Leslie lay thinking of the conversation that had passed between them. At one moment the unreality and impossibility of it all seemed to strike him so forcibly that he laughed aloud; then would come a vision of the man who had told the tale.

Hugh Rivers had never been considered a fool; indeed in the medical profession he had been looked upon as a rising man when he had been struck down by the very thing that he had set out to cure. Now he was restored to perfect health once more, and he declared, with seeming sincerity, that the cure had been effected by the reading of a book. It was indeed a strange tale.

The next morning when Angela went as usual to her brother's room, she was startled

by a request for the loan of a Bible. She knew that her brother was not in the habit of reading that sacred volume, indeed the mere fact of his asking her to lend him one showed that he did not possess a copy himself, and she was vaguely alarmed. The thought came to her that perhaps he was feeling worse and that some doubts as to a future life were troubling him.

It is a curious thing how, in this Christian country, people are positively ashamed of being caught reading their Bibles, which they profess to look upon as the Word of God. To leave a Bible on the drawing-room table would, in most houses, be considered to show a want of good taste indeed. If you read it at all it must be in your private apartment where nobody can see you. Being a Christian country, Christianity is the one thing that must not be discussed.

Leslie saw the surprised look on his sister's face and laughed, though at the same time he coloured up.

"I want to look up something I was talking about to Rivers," he said, a little awkwardly.

Angela brought him a Bible, and some little while after found occasion to ask him if he was feeling any worse, at which her brother laughed immoderately.

"I should have thought you would have known me better, Angela," he said when his mirth had subsided, "than to imagine I should go in for death-bed repentances or any of that cant. Yesterday Rivers was talking about religion, and he seems to have found the Bible an interesting study; as I hope to see a good deal of him now, I thought it might be as well if I studied it too. The different religions of the world are always rather fascinating, don't you think?"

"Yes, they most certainly are. It is curious how there have come to be so many in the world, isn't it?"

"None of them have ever proved satisfactory or adequate, you see. I suppose they will

go on multiplying until the need for expression has ceased. It is the everlasting search for truth."

Angela left her brother with the Bible and went in search of her sister. She found Gertrude in her own sitting-room, a room that in the old days had been the schoolroom, and later on a smoking-room, but which now served as a study for Gertrude, the busy member of the Leslie family.

When Angela entered she found her sister at a big writing-table, surrounded by stacks of papers, busily writing. She finished what she was doing before looking up, then, having tossed the finished letter into a basket full of similar missives, she turned to Angela.

"What is it?" she asked a little ungraciously.

"Have you got the magazines for the district?" asked Angela, smiling; "I think Arthur said he had given you the lot."

"Oh, yes. But you're not going down there this morning, are you?"

"I had thought of doing so. Is there anything else you want me to do?"

"Of course you know the Bishop is coming here to dine to-night before the service?"

"I believe I had heard something about it. It is Arthur's dedication festival, isn't it? I had forgotten."

"I should have thought you might have stayed in and helped."

"Helped? How? What to do?"

"Why, the table, of course. There is all the silver to get out, and the flowers to do."

Angela opened her eyes wide. "Goodness, all that for the Bishop?" she remarked.

"Of course. It is a great honour his coming here when he is so frightfully busy, and it is not as if we were near the church either. I presume you are going to the service to-night?"

"Oh, yes, I shall come and hear his lordship. Is the mater going?"

"Yes. The Bishop will take mother and me down in his motor. Of course he will

have his chaplain with him, so there won't be room for you, I'm afraid."

"Oh, Bernard and I will follow on in a modest hansom or a bus," laughed Angela.

"I doubt whether Bernard will go, he generally stays with Harry when we all go out."

"Oh! Bernard will go anywhere just now on the off chance of meeting Sybil, my dear, and Harry has got a friend coming in this evening, so he need not worry."

"I wish Harry would make a greater friend of Arthur," Gertrude remarked.

"Why? They are very good friends."

"Oh, in a sort of way they are, but I think Arthur could help him so much if Harry would let him."

"Do you? In what way?"

"Well! Harry is so dreadfully irreverent sometimes. I don't think he means it, but I don't think he has ever taken the trouble to think things out, and if ever one does talk in at all a religious way to him, he is so impatient."

Angela turned away to hide a smile, but it quickly vanished, and a pained expression passed over her face.

"Perhaps you and I would be impatient if we had to lie on our backs all day," she said quietly.

"All the more reason for learning patience," was the reply.

"Poor old Harry has learnt patience with a vengeance. I hope I never have to learn it in as hard a school."

"These trials are sent to us for a purpose, you should remember. If Harry has had a hard life, be sure there was some good purpose behind it; the trial was sent him for his good; and that is what I am afraid he has never realized."

"Gertrude, do you believe that God caused Harry to fall that day in order that he might live in torture for years to learn some lesson?"

"Yes. I believe the accident was permitted to happen for Harry's good."

"Then God must be a remarkable Being," said Angela, with a harsh little laugh.

"What dreadful things you do say, Angela. God is wise and just; He does not try us beyond what we are able to bear."

"No, but according to you He tries up to the breaking point, and tortures in a far more cruel manner than any human being could conceive of. If you can recollect for one moment the agony that Harry suffered in those first few months," she shuddered herself at the mere thought of it, "would you wish your worst enemy to suffer like that?"

"Of course one would not wish such a thing. God works in mysterious ways, and you know we are told in the Bible 'whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth.'"

"If God tortures people as Harry has been tortured to show His love for them," said Angela, "I think I would rather not be loved."

"Angela! how can you be so wicked?"

"Oh!" exclaimed Angela, flinging herself into a chair, "I am so weary of all the talk of

patience. Perhaps it is because I see so much more of Harry than any of you, that this awful problem of the world's pain comes home to me. You talk of his irreverence and impatience, and yet I have seen him lying there not only in physical pain, but suffering a very hell mentally, when you have all been talking and laughing in there, and not one of you has had the slightest idea of the tragedy going on in your very midst. It can't be right. I don't believe God meant it."

The sapphire eyes were bright with unshed tears, and the little hands locked together in sudden passion.

Gertrude looked at her in amazement. "You talk very wildly, Angela," she said in a superior tone, "and evidently do not in the least understand the subject you are discussing. Of course the pain in the world is very hard to understand, I know, but because you do not understand a thing it is no reason for talking blasphemously, and raving against it."

"No, I do not understand, and it seems to me that very few people in the world do. They either take everything they are told with a blind faith, or else just don't believe anything, and I believe by far the larger majority don't care a brass farthing one way or another. And yet," she added thoughtfully, "we were meant to understand, I am sure we were."

"I am sure I don't see why. I think it is most presumptuous of people who set themselves up to explain God and all His ways; we are told to be like little children."

"Yes, we are, but I have noticed that little children have a nasty habit of asking awkward questions."

Gertrude rose from her chair with sudden energy. "At any rate we are wasting a great deal of time," she remarked. "It is too late for you to go to your district now, so you had better come down and do the flowers for me." She bustled off with a good deal of noise, and Angela followed more slowly in her wake.

They had not been long at their task before they were interrupted by Arthur, who had come to make some final arrangements with Gertrude about the evening's festival. He had only been a vicar for twelve months and this was a great day in the history of his church, consequently he was much excited.

The elder Miss Leslie practically acted for him in the place of a curate. She was one of those energetic souls who are naturally made to do all the work that the weaker and more lazy folks can shift on to their shoulders, and who like it too. She had that gift for managing other people's affairs which amounts to genius in some people, and was quite invaluable to Arthur, who, being young for his position, was a little lacking in experience.

Arthur worked well and untiringly in his poor parish. He was strong, and healthy, and hard work was a necessity to him. But there was something else that was also a necessity to him, and that was popularity. A natural gift of eloquence, combined with a

great deal of book learning, had, very early in his career, made him a fashionable preacher and speaker. Consequently at certain seasons of the year he was a good deal out of his parish, and during those times Gertrude Leslie very capably acted the part of vicar.

Arthur's mother was much too taken up with the social side of his career to be able to help much in the parish. She had to keep up her acquaintance with all her titled and moneyed friends, in order to keep up likewise a supply of funds for Arthur to run his parish properly, and Sybil, as we know, he found of little use.

Mrs. Dalrymple often wished that Arthur would make up his mind to marry Gertrude. True, she was a few years older, but she would make him such an excellent wife, and take so much of the burden of the parish off his shoulders.

But what was a necessity to Arthur was unfortunately also a necessity to Gertrude. Popularity was the very breath of her life,

and Arthur was wise enough to see that it was impossible for two such people to live together in harmony; sooner or later jealousy would step in and spoil it all. Then they had too many gifts in common. Gertrude was also eloquent, and had often taken his place when he had been unable to attend some meeting. Both of them sang well. Their voices went most beautifully together in a duet. But Arthur was not at all sure that he would like his wife to sing so well; neither was he at all sure that he wanted to be managed.

So it happened that while he was debating with himself as to whether he should ask the elder Miss Leslie to be his wife, he, all unconsciously, fell in love with her younger sister, who was beautiful and artistic, and quite unsuited to be a parson's wife.

Now as he stood in the dining-room, where the girls were at work, his eyes strayed continually to Angela, while he spoke to Gertrude, and he drew nearer to the table where the girl was busy with the costly blossoms

that were to decorate the table for the dinner party in the evening. But Gertrude had no time to dally over flowers, and with unconscious energy she swept the young man away to her study.

After their business was settled she still kept him there while she talked of various trifles of mutual interest. Her manner was a little nervous; there was something she wanted to say which it was evidently very difficult to put into words. At last with something of an effort she went, as she usually did, straight to the point.

"Has it struck you that Angela has not been looking well lately?" she asked.

Arthur started slightly and coloured, but Gertrude was too preoccupied to notice him.

"I have observed that she has been rather more restless," he answered.

"I am very worried about her, she seems to have become so odd, so eccentric, her views are so very extraordinary."

"In what way do you mean?"

"I mean her religious views. I was talking to her only this morning, and she spoke so irreverently, and in such an extraordinary manner about God. Then because I remonstrated with her she quite lost her temper. Angela does not very often do that."

"No, I am sure she does not," said Arthur warmly; "perhaps, as you say, she is not feeling well."

"What I am afraid of is that she is getting affected by Harry's views of things. You know he is utterly irreligious, and Angela spends a great deal of time with him."

If those two good people had looked into the library just then, it might have astonished them not a little to see the subject of their conversation quite absorbed in the reading of the Bible. But that of course they did not know.

"I do not think Harry really has much influence with Angela," remarked Arthur in an unconvincing tone. "Of course they are very devoted, but I don't think Harry cares about

discussing such subjects, he really knows so little about it, you see."

"That's just it, and those are the very people who so often destroy the faith of others. I wish you would try and tackle Harry. I am sure you could; he will not listen to me."

"I am afraid it is very little use my talking to him, I have tried so often, and always with the same result. The awakening will come in time, but not through my means, I fear."

"I wish there was a little more of the missionary spirit about you, Arthur, you are rather fond of leaving things after one or two failures."

"I am afraid I do not take failure lightly."

"But that should spur you on to fresh effort, not depress you. Well! if you don't feel equal to tackling Harry again at present, you might at least speak to Angela, she is scarcely likely to lose her temper with you."

"Certainly, I will speak to Angela." He took a watch from his pocket and glanced at

it. "I can spare another half hour, perhaps I shall find her alone now," and with rather unnecessary haste, he made for the door.

Gertrude did not attempt to detain him, and in a very few minutes he was back in the dining-room. But Angela had fled. Perhaps she had gone up to the studio; he thought at any rate he would go up and see.

His knock at the door was answered, and he went in. Angela was standing by the window in a rather dejected attitude. The fire which she had just lighted had not yet burnt up, and in the grey light of the winter morning the big room looked cold and cheerless.

"I hoped I should find you here," said the young man cheerfully. "You have never yet shown me the picture."

Angela turned from the window with her usual sweet expression, and without speaking went to the easel and uncovered the canvas, which was now quite finished.

A little cry escaped Arthur, then he stood and gazed in silence.

"It is splendid," he murmured at last. "I did not know that Harry was to be your model. How wonderfully well he looks in the monk's cowl. But how did you get that awful look of pain on his face? It makes one feel queer to look at him."

"I think it is burnt in upon my brain," said the girl, and she dropped the curtain into its place again.

Arthur turned away towards the window. "Have the motor-cars been troubling you again?" he asked gently.

"They never cease to trouble me," was the weary answer.

Impulsively he turned towards her with outstretched hands. "I wish you would let me help you, Angela," he said earnestly.

"Let you?" exclaimed the girl, "I only wish you could."

"But are you so sure I cannot?"

Angela shook her head, and his hands dropped nervelessly to his sides.

"I am afraid you cannot," she said gently.

"But, Angela, let me try. What is it that especially troubles you? Come let us sit down and talk quietly. I cannot bear to see you looking miserable."

"Can you explain to me the problem of all the pain and suffering in the world? How is it that there is so much sickness, so much want in the world? If there is a God looking down on it all, how can He bear to see all the cruelty and wrong and not interfere to put an end to it?"

"Because everything that is done in the world is done with a divine purpose. Pain and suffering are the punishment God metes out for sin. We cannot always see the reason of things, or how they are going to work out, but surely it is not much to ask of us that we should trust Him, and believe that He knows best. A child cannot always understand what its father's purpose is when he inflicts a punishment, but he knows that his father loves him and that he only does what is for his good."

"I do not agree with you. I should consider that a parent who did not make a child understand exactly why, and for what it was punished, was behaving most unfairly to the child, and I think it is a very, very great deal too much to ask of us that we should believe in an all-loving God who yet allows the most hideous suffering to go on unchecked."

"But it is only common justice that we should suffer the consequences of our sins."

"Yes, if it were only the consequence of sin I would not complain. But look at Harry. No one ever had a word to say against him. He was acknowledged by everyone to be a real good sort. He would not hurt a fly. And yet there he is struck down suddenly in the very best time of his life. You cannot say that it was in consequence of his sins."

"That is a case where I own it is very hard to see the working of the divine Will. But perhaps there was some lesson that it was necessary for Harry to learn, and only some severe trial like this was able to teach him."

"Do you mean to tell me that an all-powerful, all-wise God had no other means at His command than to make His child suffer untold tortures? It is not reasonable. You make God less than human. You would not torture a child whom you wished to teach; you would find means to convey your lesson by love, would you not?"

"I should try love first, of course."

"And you would try love last, my dear Arthur. You are not a fiend. Then why try to make the God you worship one?"

"Angela dear, be reasonable. It is the last thing I wish to do to make God out a fiend, you know that. I am afraid I express myself badly. How can I put it? If you knew some one who was ill and had to have an operation you would not prevent the surgeon using his knife, you would let him do his work, however painful, because you would look to the result, the ultimate good to be obtained."

"Yes, I understand that, but if it was some

one I loved I should want to understand exactly how and why the pain must be inflicted. I should want the ill explained before I allowed the cure."

"But if a parent knew that the operation must take place, there would be no need for a child to know, don't you see? The child would trust its father."

"And the father would explain to the child, you know he would. It is useless to argue, you cannot convince me. You take your God with a blind trust, I cannot, I wish I could."

"Is that the only problem that troubles you?" asked Arthur, with a curious sense of his own incompetency.

"The only one! Good gracious, no! There is death, for instance. You believe that death is merely the passing on to another life, don't you?"

"Certainly I do."

"Then why do we do everything we can to delay that passing on? Why, if death is the entrance to the kingdom of God, which we

pray for daily, do we do everything we can to keep it away from us?"

"Our life here is only the school for the life to come; it would be wrong of us to try and cut short our probation. Besides, our human bodies were given us for a purpose too, and until we have fulfilled that purpose we are not ready for the future life."

"Did it ever occur to you that if God gave us these human bodies it was a pity He did not make them more perfect?"

"But their imperfection is the result of sin, Angela."

"Yes, but then Christ died to take away the sins of the world, didn't He?"

"Why, yes, but we have to work out our own redemption."

"But repentance and prayer do not cure sickness. If Harry were repentant to-morrow for every little fault he had ever committed, and prayed all day, he would not get better physically."

"You do not know that."

Angela laughed. "My dear Arthur, I do know it, and so do you. According to the church the age of miracles is past, isn't it?"

"Of course it is. Miracles were necessary in the beginning to convince people, but as the world got more advanced they were no longer needed, and so they ceased."

"I don't believe one bit that it was because they were no longer needed; I believe it was because the people lost their faith. God knows they are wanted badly enough in these days. I think it is a great pity that they cannot be revived. Not that anyone would believe in them now-a-days."

"Angela, why do you talk like this? You never used to be a sceptic, what has happened to you lately?"

"I don't know, but everywhere I go I seem to come across pain and suffering. At home it is always before my eyes. I go down into your parish and always, always it is the same. I go for a walk and I come upon a procession of unemployed. I think it is awful that such

a state of things should exist in a country that calls itself Christian. If we were a heathen country like China it would not be so bad, but we call ourselves Christian and all round us there is the most awful want and misery and so few people seem to care. I think it is dreadful, dreadful; and somehow, somewhere, I believe that the religion of the country is to blame. Somehow the real teaching of Christ has been lost sight of and He himself forgotten, while a man-made church tries to do His work and has failed."

"I do not think you should say it has failed."

"Do you think it has been a success? Do you imagine that Christ intended to have some dozens of different churches all fighting tooth and nail? Do you imagine that He intended to have bishops in His church living in castles and being paid thousands a year. Where do you find all that in His teaching?"

"We must have leaders in the church as well as in everything else. You speak as if

their castles and incomes were their own, and not simply held in trust for the use of their dioceses. We have some splendid men among our bishops, some of the finest men in all the world."

"I am not finding fault with the men, but with the church as it is to-day. It is the whole system that is to blame. If a man has splendid ideals it is made almost impossible for him to keep them, by the organization that hems him in. He cannot live like his Master because it would not be fitting to the dignity of the church. Then, too, look at the money question; how many of our churches are up to their eyes in debt, while the vicar preaches to his people, 'Owe no man anything.'"

"Of course that is very much to be deplored, I grant you, but the work must go on, and the expenses are so enormous."

"Shall I tell you why the church is so often in debt? Because the heart of the people is not with it. If a people's heart is in the work the money is always forthcoming. Look at

the Roman church, for instance, walk into Westminster Cathedral; or just look at the immense sums that we are getting for our suffrage movement. The heart of the women is in it and they are ready to sacrifice anything for it. How many people have that enthusiasm for the church, do you think?"

"A great many more than you think."

"I sincerely hope so; but they want rousing up to it, and until something happens to rouse the church to a knowledge of its fearful deadness, nothing will ever be done. Perhaps when the women of England are alive to their responsibilities and take their proper place in the world, something may be done, for I think as a body they are good and religious."

"It is not likely that the women of England will succeed where the church has failed."

"I am not so sure; after all they are the majority in the country, aren't they?"

Arthur smiled. "I don't want to discuss the suffrage question with you, we have

thrashed that out already and nearly come to blows."

"Oh! you are a hopeless conservative, Arthur. You and I will never agree, so why do we waste our time."

"Don't you think, Angela, that we might help each other and come to agree in time?" His voice was anxious and eager.

Angela shook her head. "If we lived to the age of Methuselah we should never have two ideas in common," she said with a laugh that had little mirth in it. "There goes the gong for lunch, you had better come down and have some. I'm sure you must be feeling rather faint."

IX

THE dinner, which was served early on account of the service afterwards, was a great success, and Mrs. Leslie was a charming hostess, while Bernard did his best to play the host.

The bishop, who was a comparatively young man, was a very genial and pleasant companion; he knew everyone and was full of amusing and witty stories about most of their mutual friends. The chaplain, too, was by no means dull, so that the conversation did not flag, and the time came for their departure too soon for everyone.

The great motor snorted up to the door and bore away the two clergymen with Mrs. Leslie and her elder daughter, while Angela and her brother called a hansom and followed at a more leisurely if less exhilarating speed.

The church was situated in that part of London which is known rather vaguely as the East End. Though Arthur lived in his parish he spent a great deal of his time and often slept at his mother's house in the West End. No one expected him to live among his people, they were mostly very poor and dirty and lived in horrible slums. The church was old and had once been beautiful, but much of its beauty had been destroyed by various attempts at restoration. Arthur had done his best to restore the original beauty, but had not been entirely successful. He had put up a beautiful reredos in memory of his father and had succeeded in getting one or two fine windows. Mrs. Leslie and Gertrude had supplied quantities of beautiful church work and the former had erected a fine stone pulpit in memory of her husband.

On either side of the church hung pictures representing the Stations of the Cross, which Angela had copied for Arthur when he first came.

On this particular night the church was a bower of beautiful flowers. The day before a bevy of young ladies, headed by Gertrude, had come down in carriages and motor-cars laden with floral offerings, and with much whispering and laughter had, under Arthur's directions, decorated his church. The result was most beautiful, though the strong scent of the flowers combined with the incense proved rather much for some of the worshippers.

Arthur had a good choir; he was thoroughly musical himself and took tremendous pains and interest in this part of his work. The services were always bright and he usually got a very good congregation.

To-night the church was packed. It had been well advertised that the bishop was going to preach and the people flocked to hear him.

The church was dedicated to St. Thomas and the bishop took for his text part of the twenty-ninth verse of the twentieth chapter of St. John: "Blessed are they that have not seen,

and yet have believed." In a few well-chosen phrases he brought before them the scene in which the words occur and depicted the character of the doubting Apostle. Then he went on to deduce the lesson, pointing out how in those days everyone wanted proof. Nothing was taken any more on trust or with faith, everything must be proved. People of to-day were like Thomas, unless they could see and touch they would not believe. The spirit of the age was essentially material—and a great deal more in this strain.

Angela, as she sat in the corner of a pew rather far back in the crowded church, listened attentively. The moment the bishop had given out his text her eyes had sought Arthur's and they had exchanged a smile. Had she not been a very doubting Thomas that morning talking to him. Perhaps the bishop would clear up some of her doubts. With an inward prayer that he might, she set herself to listen. But as the time went on her disappointment grew. He was elo-

quent and had a beautiful voice, but he made no more of his subject than to denounce the material tendency of the age and to plead for more spiritualism of the true kind. He did not trace the causes of the Apostle's state of mind, neither did he show how the doubt could be silenced otherwise than by proof. And yet Angela knew that everyone else would be content.

Her eyes wandered down the row of faces in the vicarage pew. Mrs. Dalrymple in velvet and furs sat at one end with an expression of wrapt attention on her face; evidently she was satisfied. Next her Mrs. Leslie nodded her head in appreciation while she kept a commanding eye on the choir in front of her; while beside her mother sat Gertrude with face upturned to the preacher in a sort of adoration, quite absorbed in the words of wisdom that fell from his lips. At the end of the pew was Sybil looking unfeignedly bored, while from time to time she played with her muff and covertly tried to attract the atten-

tion of the chaplain whose eyes not unfrequently strayed in her direction; he was evidently too accustomed to hearing the great man to give him undivided attention.

Arthur's face was turned towards the altar and Angela could not see his expression. She wondered if he was thinking of their conversation of the morning.

Her eyes wandered over the faces in her own vicinity. Beside her was a poor woman clad in old and shabby garments with a face lined with care and trouble. At the beginning of the sermon Angela had noted her bright intelligent expression; now, as she glanced at her she saw that it had been succeeded by a look of apathy and indifference. On the other side of Bernard was a workingman. At first he had appeared to listen attentively; now he was fast asleep. What was the matter?

Religion was not dead or the church would not have been packed, as it was, with tired working people eager to hear the gospel mes-

sage; the fault did not lie with the people then. Was it the clergy?

The bishop was a good man, she knew. He worked with untiring energy, and was a favourite everywhere. Arthur, too, was quite popular in his parish; he did not spare himself, and that he would die for his views, if necessary, Angela had not a shadow of doubt.

No, it was not the clergy either that were to blame, the fault lay somewhere in that great organization called the church. Somehow, somewhere, perhaps far, far back in the lost ages, they had begun to lose the spirit of the Master's teaching and had only held to the letter, and now they had almost lost sight of the Founder in all the trivial detail of the mighty organization. The pity of it!

To Angela, gazing on the faces round her and listening to the studied eloquence of the great preacher in the flower- and incense-laden church, came a vision of the sermon preached hundreds of years ago on the top of a mountain. What a contrast! Had the crowd

listened with faces like these? The girl thought not.

She was roused from her reverie by the rising of the congregation; the sermon was over. She wondered how many people would go away the better for what they had seen and heard.

As the four Leslies drove home in the carriage and pair that had come to fetch them, Mrs. Leslie and Gertrude were loud in their praises of the "dear Bishop." Angela lay back in her corner, tired and silent, and Bernard fingered his cigarette case and frequently yawned.

"So refined, so cultured," murmured Mrs. Leslie. "It is such a pleasure to hear a man who really speaks the queen's English nowadays."

"And such a lovely voice," remarked Gertrude, "I could listen to it forever."

"His face, too, is so very fine; without being really handsome, he has such a very charming expression."

"Yes, he has such jolly eyes, hasn't he?"

"And such a sense of humour, too, which is always a blessing."

"That quiet manner, too, is most impressive, so much better than all that ranting. I think Arthur is rather too dramatic in the pulpit."

And so on. Not one word of the actual sermon or of the service—only talk of the man.

When they reached home it was past ten o'clock and Angela turned into the library to wish her brother good-night, hearing from the butler that his friend had gone.

"Well, how did the show go off?" was Harry's greeting.

"Oh! most excellently well, his lordship was so refined, so cultured, has such a lovely voice, and impressive manner, and—and I think that is all."

Harry laughed, he recognized the originators of these remarks. "That's all right, then everyone was as usual delighted. You look

rather tired, little woman. Feeling all right?"

"Oh, yes, I'm all right."

"You've been looking a bit off these last few days, I fancy. You're not worrying about anything, are you?"

"Oh, not more than usual," smiling.

"I think you want a change. What do you say to going down to Hollydene after Christmas?"

"I should love to, but I couldn't go alone, it wouldn't be worth while opening up the house and no one else would come with me then."

"Take Sybil with you."

"My dear boy, Sybil would be bored to death alone in the country with me."

"Well, what do you say to my going with you?"

"You!"

Angela's eyes opened wide with astonishment. Never since his accident had Harry left the house in town, except on one occa-

sion, when he had gone abroad to see some specialist that he had been recommended to consult; and often she had heard him swear that never again would he enter Hollydene; it was fraught with too painful recollections. Formerly they had always gone there for a part of every year, for the hunting and the shooting, but since Harry's accident the house had been shut up, save for a couple of months in the summer when Mrs. Leslie and Gertrude went down there and entertained their friends, while Angela stayed in town to look after her brothers, going down there herself later when the house had always been lent for a time to the Dalrymples.

"You!" she exclaimed, again wondering if she had heard aright.

"Yes," he replied, smiling, "don't you think it would be rather nice for you and me to go down together?"

"Why, it would be just heavenly; but are you sure you would care to go?"

"Yes, I have been thinking about it. I

have been rather a fool to stick here as I have done and to imagine that it would upset me to see the old place again. I have begun rather to long to get away from town and these everlasting books," waving his hand round the walls; "I think a change would buck me up."

"Oh! it would be just lovely," exclaimed Angela, her face already losing the tired and worried look it had worn when she entered. "But the mater would never hear of your going down there in the cold without her to look after you."

"But, after Christmas; I did not mean immediately. I think I should have to wait until the hunting was over, I don't think I could bear that. Suppose we went down at the end of April; the season would just be about to begin up here and nothing would tear the mater and Gertrude away from that. You wouldn't mind missing the season, would you?"

"Mind! Why I should be just delighted."

"Oh! I had forgotten one thing, we could not go until May."

"Not until May? Why?"

"The Academy would not be open. You can't go away without seeing your picture hung."

"I don't want to see it hung. As long as it is accepted, that is all I care about; the others may have the pleasure of seeing it hung. I would not send it up but for all of you."

"Oh! come now, you would like to see it hung, I am sure."

"Yes, for one reason, I should."

"What is that?"

"Because I would like the men who have the power to hang it, to acknowledge that there is yet another woman who can paint. There are too few women among our artists, so for the sake of my sex I would like to see the picture hung."

"Hear, hear! Well, we must try and fix the visit up. The old Robinsons are still caretaking, aren't they?"

"Yes."

"Then if I took Andrews and you took a maid down that would be sufficient staff. Can the old girl cook all right?"

"She always cooks for the Dalrymples when they are there and I've never heard a complaint, so I expect she is pretty good," she relied rather seriously.

"Yes, I rather guess she is," laughing. "Does the old chap still do the gardening?"

"Yes, he and a boy between them."

"Of course there are no horses or carriages down there, I suppose; the mater always takes the carriage with her, doesn't she?"

"Yes, we couldn't have that; they want it here; besides, we shouldn't want a carriage."

"Oh, yes, we should; we should have to have something for station-work in case we had any visitors."

Angela stared. Was Harry contemplating a house-party? What had come over him?

"Of course you would take your own gee," he went on, "and then the question is, shall

we have a dog cart or trap of some sort, or shall I buy a motor?"

"You, talking of motor-cars!"

Harry laughed. "I am not contemplating a drive in a dog cart, nor a spin in a motor just as present; but there are—er—one or two people I thought we might ask down to see us, if you don't mind?"

"Mind? I should just love it."

"And now that is all settled, you had best be off to bed, you look rather fagged."

Angela rose from her seat on the floor where she had been sitting near the fire and came to her brother's side.

"I shall dream of our holiday till the time comes," she said with shining eyes as she stooped to kiss him. "It will be like old times indeed to have you once more at Hollydene."

X

A FEW days after her conversation with her brother, Angela, coming in late from a long afternoon in her district, turned her steps to the library. After she had knocked she heard the sound of voices within, but it was too late to retreat, for Harry had called an impatient "Come in."

As she entered a man rose from one of the deep chairs near the couch and Angela saw that it was Sir Hugh Rivers.

"I am sorry to have disturbed you," she said as she shook hands. "I did not know that there was anyone here. I ought to have asked."

"You don't disturb us in the least," said Harry, cheerfully. "Rivers, have you any objection to my telling my sister what the subject of our conversation was?"

"Most certainly not, if you think Miss Leslie would care to hear."

"I feel sure she would; besides, if I am to carry out the plan I have in mind she will have to know all about it. We were talking of Christian Science, Angela. Rivers is a Scientist."

Angela looked at Sir Hugh in astonishment.

"You don't really believe in it," she exclaimed incredulously.

"Yes, Miss Leslie, I really believe in it," was the smiling answer.

"But it is only an American invention to make money, isn't it? Wasn't it made up by a Mrs. Eddy?"

"It was discovered by Mrs. Eddy and explained by her, certainly, but she did not invent it. Neither was it ever intended as a mere money-making concern."

"They are the people who say we live in a dream, aren't they? and let people die because they won't send for a doctor?"

"You evidently have never studied the subject, Miss Leslie. Perhaps it would interest you to know that it was through Christian Science that I recovered my health after all the cleverest doctors in England told me I must die."

"But how could Christian Science cure you? Was it faith-healing?"

"No, it was not through faith that I was healed, but through understanding."

"I say, Rivers," interrupted Harry, who had been watching his sister somewhat anxiously, "don't you think it would be better if you told Angela the history of your recovery? Just as you told it to me, if you wouldn't mind."

"Certainly, I would not mind, but perhaps it does not interest Miss Leslie?"

"It interests me immensely, and if you don't mind, I should very much like to hear."

Angela sat down in her favourite seat on the high fire-guard and Sir Hugh resumed the

chair he had vacated on her entrance. Harry anxiously noted every movement.

In almost the same words as he had used that first afternoon when he had come to see his old friend, Sir Hugh related the story of his hopeless illness and then his introduction to Christian Science, his study of it, and his subsequent recovery.

The two men had had many talks since then and now Harry watched his sister's face with unusual attention. He was more anxious than he would have cared to own as to what Angela would say about it.

At first the girl sat with usually attentive and sympathetic expression, but when Sir Hugh came to the reading of the book, Science and Health, her attention deepened until at last she seemed to be listening to his words with a breathless interest. When he had finished there was a long silence; then Angela drew a deep breath and said in a hushed voice:

"It is wonderful; I cannot believe it. That

you should be healed by reading this book. What is this wonderful understanding that you speak of?"

"The realization that God—Good—is the one power, the one reality, and that which is antagonistic to God is a false belief and an unreality."

"You mean that all evil is unreal?"

"I mean that to mortals uninstructed in truth, evil is the real, and spirit unreal, but to our true, that is, spiritual sense, the spirit is the real, and the evil is unreal."

"Yes, I understand that, but evil is so very evident all round us that we can scarcely be expected to look upon it as an unreality, can we?"

"Only by realizing its unreality in God's kingdom can we ever hope to get rid of it. If we acknowledge that evil is a power as well as good, then we no longer have an all-powerful God, we have a God who is a mixture of good and evil. You do not believe that, do you?"

"No, I have never thought that God could be anything but good."

"And you are right; but if you acknowledge a supreme Power that is good, you must also acknowledge that the opposite—evil—is not a power."

"Yes. I see that."

"One of my greatest difficulties in the old days was to account for the terrible pain and suffering in the world. I was taught as a child that it was God's way of educating His children and that if He did not actually send it, He at any rate allowed it for our good; and that He had endowed some of His creatures with the power of discovering and using medical science to alleviate the pain He had sent. This idea decided me early in life to become a doctor, but I think I had never really understood the suffering in the world till I went to the hospital. In a very short time the God of my childhood had vanished. I could not any longer believe that a just God sent such punishments to His people. As I began to study medical science more

closely I very soon lost my faith in all the supernatural part of the gospel story. Then I began the usual search for truth, but none of the religions I studied appealed to me at all, and I became a very thorough sceptic. Not till I read Science and Health did I begin to see a glimmer of what religion might mean. Now, of course, it has become the one real thing in my life. Through it I have won back my divine heritage of perfect health, and through it I am enabled to help others as I have never been able to before."

"Then you do not believe that God is responsible for the pain and suffering in the world?" Angela's voice was very eager.

"No, Miss Leslie, we do not. If God be infinite Life, Truth, Love, He can have nothing to do with their opposites."

"That thought appeals to me tremendously and I would like to be able to believe that. That has been a night-mare to me—why God makes His children suffer."

"Believe me, He does not," was the earnest answer. "The suffering comes through our

lack of understanding. We do not realize the absolute goodness of God, and the consequent unreality of everything else. If a man is made in the image of God, how can he reflect anything but the attributes of God? He cannot really reflect what is not in the original, can he?"

"I should naturally answer no, but when I am conscious of the evil all around I feel I must hesitate. But how does this knowledge of truth heal the sick?"

"Why, if once we realize that sin and sickness are indeed false beliefs and opposed to God, then we can deny them, and by refusing to believe anything but the truth—that man is the expression of God's creation and therefore perfect, the false beliefs vanish. As of old, they cannot stand the light of truth, and once they have vanished, only the good and perfect can remain."

"It sounds most beautiful, if it is really true."

"It is really true. If you doubt it, though

I stand before you as a proof of its truth, read it and study it for yourself. There is nothing in Science and Health which cannot be verified by the Bible."

"And you, yourself, can do this healing?"

"No, I cannot, but God can, and He does so through the understanding of His children."

"But you have this understanding?"

"In some measure, yes."

A sudden light dawned in Angela's blue eyes, and she rose from her seat and made a step towards him.

"Oh!" she exclaimed, "could you—could you cure—would it be possible to cure Harry?"

"I believe it would," was the grave answer. "I can make no promises, but this I will say, that it would not be the fault of Christian Science if he was not cured."

"Oh, Harry!" exclaimed Angela, turning to her brother. Then words failed her and the tears came into her eyes.

Harry held out his hand and drew her towards him so that Hugh could not see her face.

"Now, you understand, little woman, what I meant when I spoke of a plan just now. I have decided to give Christian Science a fair trial, and Hugh has undertaken my case and will be my healer. Perhaps after all I shall be a man again." Then seeing that Angela was quite overcome, he added gently: "Run away now, dear, and think matters over; it is rather too tremendous to take in all at once, isn't it?"

Angela pressed her brother's hand silently, then turned to Sir Hugh. Words would not come, but as she held out her hand and looked up into his face, the sapphire eyes, swimming in tears, were more eloquent than she knew.

After Angela had left the room there was a long silence. Then Harry turned to his guest.

"Thank you, very much," he said warmly. "As you can see, Angela and I are very much

attached to each other, and it meant a very great deal to me that her first glimpse of this should be right and fair. I think you have won a victory," smiling.

"Truth wins every time," was the quiet answer.

"But although she has taken it so well now, I know Angela too well not to be aware that doubts of all kinds will assail her. Fortunately the difficulties that hedge me do not exist for her; you can put her in touch with your church, can you not?"

"Most certainly. I would advise that in the first place she should come to what we call testimony meetings. They are held every Wednesday evening. At them we have first a short evening service, and then anyone who likes may get up and give his or her experience of what Christian Science has done for them. Sometimes the most wonderful testimonies are given."

"Yes, I suppose so. Are these meetings open to the public?"

"Assuredly, and all reading rooms, too, and all our literature, and there is always some one in charge who will answer questions."

"That sounds a sensible arrangement. May I tell Angela that you will take her then to one of these Wednesday meetings?"

"Most certainly. If your sister would give us the pleasure of having her to dine with us next Wednesday, we could all go on to the meeting afterwards. My mother and sisters generally go; no one misses the Wednesday meetings if they can help it."

"Very well, then, I will tell her. I am sure she will be glad of the opportunity to hear more about it. I think she has been very much worried lately about her religious beliefs."

XI

THE following Wednesday Angela went, as her brother had arranged, to dine with the Riverses in Russell Square.

It was an evening that lived very long in the girl's memory. It seemed to her that there was something in the very atmosphere of the house that breathed peace and love; something quite different to what she had ever felt among any other of her London friends. Perhaps, too, her own eagerness to be in sympathy with these people had much to do with it.

During the few days that had intervened since she had heard Sir Hugh's tale Angela had experienced many different moods. Again and again she had told herself that it could not be true, and again and again her doubts had been silenced by the remembrance of the man himself, the proof of his own story;

and always there rose before her eyes the two visions of her brother, the being she loved better than anyone else on earth; the one vision of him as he used to be—handsome, strong, vigorous—the other, as she always saw him now, the wreck of all that he had once been, and whenever that second vision floated before the girl's eyes, she made up her mind that nothing she ever said or did should prevent him from trying this one hope; and a desperate longing had come to her that she, too, should be able to understand this wonderful faith that could heal the sick and make men glad and free.

So to-night, as she sat at the simply-appointed dinner table, her mood was unusually receptive. Mrs. Rivers was one of those gentle, sweet old ladies for whom the world is always the better, if it did but know it. She was neither very clever nor very aristocratic, but she was just a simple old lady. Her three children adored her, and she, in her turn, was devoted to them. There seemed no question of

authority here, and yet they all three treated her with gentle reverence that astonished Angela when she thought of the domestic scenes that were frequently enacted at home.

Sir Hugh made a charming host. He was bright and lively with the natural spirits that come from perfect health and freedom from care. He was clever and artistic, so that he and Angela had many interests in common apart from the one great subject which had brought them together; but it seemed to the girl that in some subtle way the one subject was always there, and though it never obtruded itself, it coloured every thought and word. Later, when the conversation turned on Christian Science, Angela was astounded, and at first almost shocked, at the familiar way they talked of everyone and everything in the Bible. They were never irreverent, but brought up as she had been with the idea that all things sacred must be held private, it took her some time to get used to it.

Hugh Rivers' two sisters were very typical

English girls of the nicest kind, girls who had been well-educated at home and abroad, accomplished, well-read, and taking an intelligent interest in the world in which they lived. They could ride, row and play tennis and golf with the best, and were general favourites in the society in which they moved. But the thing which impressed Angela most about them was their extraordinary lightness of heart. Nothing seemed to worry them and the word fear was unknown.

Angela was especially attracted by the younger one, possibly because she could see that the understanding which existed between Betty and her brother was something akin to that which knitted her so closely to Harry, and also on account of her very innocent, child-like face. Betty was nothing to look at. She was small and fair, but the clearness of her brown eyes was oddly attractive, and without being in the least bit priggish, she seemed to radiate goodness.

Angela learned a great deal that night in

that simple household, and was destined to remember that little dinner with untold gratitude all her life.

Very soon after the meal was over they started for the hall at which the Christian Science meeting was held. When they arrived the room was already nearly full, and some one was playing an organ. Angela soon found herself seated between Betty and Hugh, and with a strange feeling of mystery and curiosity, she let her eyes wander round the room. It seemed odd to her that the service should be held in a concert hall; somehow she did not quite like it, it was so very different from the beautiful church in which she was accustomed to worship.

At one end of the room was a big platform on which stood a reading desk and chair, and just in front of them a large vase of flowers—that was all. Presently, from behind a curtain that draped the back, a lady appeared and took her stand at the desk. She was middle-aged and beautifully dressed, and to An-

gela's intense surprise, conducted the service unaided.

The service itself was quite short and simple. It started with a hymn that Angela knew from Hymns Ancient and Modern, though the book she shared with Betty was a Christian Science Hymnal. Then followed a reading from the Bible, and passages from the Christian Science text-book. Then for a short space there was silent prayer, followed by the Lord's Prayer, repeated aloud, after which came another hymn, at the close of which the reader announced that the meeting was open to anyone who wished to testify as to what Christian Science had done for them.

A man rose and told how he had been cured of failing eyesight; then another rose, and one after another people told the tale of the wonderful healing and blessing they had received from this strange religion.

It seemed to Angela that she was in some land of dreams and unreality. It was all so

wonderful, so unlike anything she had ever come across before, and the more she heard, the more it was borne in upon her that a great truth lay behind all these stories. They could not be invented, they were real testimonies from widely different sources, all agreeing in the desire to attest to this beautiful, strange religion that had power to make them whole and free.

At the end of the meeting Sir Hugh introduced her to the lady reader and Angela had an opportunity of asking many questions. At first the feeling that she must not talk in church made her shy, but after a little while her great desire to learn and understand overcame all other feelings and very soon she was in deep and earnest conversation with this new friend.

When at last Betty came to say they must go, Angela rose reluctantly and joined the others. At the door Mrs. Rivers met her with a book in her hand which she held towards the girl.

"My dear, this is a copy of Science and Health; will you accept it with my love, and I trust it may bring to you the peace and happiness it has brought to us."

Angela took the book without speaking. Then she bent and kissed the kind old face. To-night she seemed to have entered into a new world and at present she was bewildered and a little bit afraid.

Having put his mother and sisters into a bus, Sir Hugh turned to Angela.

"You will let me see you home?"

Angela assented, and they walked on, side by side. It was a fine, warm evening and the hour was still early. The girl asked if he would mind walking, the distance was not great and Angela felt the need of air and exercise to calm the tumult of her thoughts.

Their way led them across the park and it was not until they had gone some distance that Angela broke the silence.

"I feel as if I had been into some new world to-night," she said softly, "nothing

seems quite real. I am afraid to let myself believe it all in case I should wake up and find it is not true."

"But you have woke up; that is just what has happened. The dream is over and now the realities are going to begin for you."

"Yes, I think they are. If you only knew what the thought of Harry's recovery is to me. His suffering has been a nightmare."

"I can quite believe that. What a shame!"

"Tell me how can I best work so as to help Harry? He will be cured, will he not?"

"I feel sure that he will, and our best way to help him is to realize the truth and practise it."

"That is easy for you, who understand, but for me?"

"It is easy for no one, but it can be done with earnest study and work. I think the understanding will not be long in coming to you, though," he added.

"Why to me?"

"Because you are really seeking for the

truth. To you that is the one reality in life. Religion is an absolute necessity to an artist above all people, and until you have found the truth you get no rest, and so your art, and you, suffer."

"Yes, I think you are right. But how am I to begin?"

"Study the book my mother has given you. That is the best and surest guide. But read it with your Bible and verify all you read. You will soon begin to grasp the meaning, and then put it into practice as you go. It means keeping a tremendous hold over your thoughts and words, so that as little as possible that is not good and pure goes out into the world, and every time a wrong thought rises, deny it instantly and realize the truth, then all will be well."

"I see. That certainly does not sound easy."

"It is not. But then the encouragement is so tremendous, every evil thought denied is killed outright, and that is one less in the

world, so that you are always working to destroy the evil in the world, and you get such good results at every turn."

"One thing that struck me very much tonight was the lightheartedness of these people, they seemed to be so free from care and worry."

"They are. Their whole trust is in God and He has never failed, so why should they not be lighthearted? You must be lighthearted too," he went on softly. "I think you were meant to be a child of the light and sunshine, and you must not paint any more pictures of pain, only of joy."

Just then they reached her home and Hugh held out his hand.

"Good-night," he said, in the same gentle voice, looking down into her blue eyes, "and remember the dream is over and you really are awake."

That night, as Angela slowly undressed and went to bed, it occurred to her that her walk home was not the least strange part of this

strange evening. With how many men of her acquaintance, who were not parsons, would it have been possible to take a moonlight walk and discuss nothing but religion and not feel bored either, but intensely interested? She wondered, and as she reviewed in her mind the many men that she constantly met and talked to, she could not think of one with whom she could have talked as she had done on her homeward walk that night.

XII

IT was the first Thursday in May, and Mrs. Leslie's drawing-rooms were filled with a gay and fashionable throng.

Angela's picture had been well hung at Burlington House and had excited quite a considerable amount of attention, particularly as the rumour had got about that the model for the man in the guise of a monk was the invalid brother who was never to be seen, and about whom, therefore, many stories were rife. A problem picture, too, always excites more notice and criticism, and Angela's title, "None So Blind," left much to the imagination.

To-day everyone had come to congratulate her and her mother, and to ask as many questions as possible. It was all very distasteful to Angela, but her mother had wished her to

be there, and she knew that it would have been foolish to stay away.

Just now there was a lull in the stream of visitors and Angela stood in one of the long windows with a cup of tea in her hand which Arthur had just fetched for her.

"You have not given me a chance to offer my congratulations," he said in a low voice. "I little thought our conversation that day would lead to such results."

"Neither did I," answered the girl. Her face was flushed and her eyes were bright. However distasteful it may be to have a fuss made over one's doings, it is impossible to be indifferent to success. She looked very lovely, Arthur thought, as she stood in the window with a ray of sunlight falling on her bronze hair and that vivid expression in her blue eyes. He nearly lost his head, but at that moment another arrival came up to Angela.

"My dear Miss Leslie, my warmest congratulations; charming, but where, where on earth did you find that beautiful monk? I

told my husband you must have been breaking the rules of some Italian monastery or something, he is so life-like."

"There was no need to go to an Italian monastery," answered Angela, "the monk in my picture is a portrait of my brother Harry."

"Your brother! You don't say so? What a handsome man, so interesting. But why did you give it that odd title? Of course it is her beauty that he is blind to?"

Angela laughed and glanced at Arthur.

"I thought I had expressed my meaning, but it seems I have not. It is humiliating having to explain. He sees her beauty all right. What he does not see is that he is giving up all the beauty, happiness and goodness in life. He thinks that suffering is sent by God and that the more he suffers the better pleased God will be, which, of course, is all a mistake, don't you see?"

"What an odd idea. I always thought monks were splendid to go away and shut

themselves up like that. Don't you agree with me, Mr. Dalrymple?"

Arthur looked appealingly at the girl as he answered, "Yes, I do. I think very few people realize how much good they do by their self-sacrifice and devoted lives."

Angela did not speak and someone else claimed the other woman's attention.

"A very fine picture, my dear," said an old gentleman, coming up to the girl, "a very fine study of Master Harry's face, but very unpleasant, too. Why your monk should make himself and everyone else so exceedingly uncomfortable I cannot, for the life of me, imagine."

"Because he is blind," said Angela, smiling.

"Ah! I want to have a word about that," said a man who was standing near. "You know he would never have held out with that vision in front of him."

"You evidently did not study the face," said the old gentleman, "there is strength in

every line of it. Perhaps you are not acquainted with the original?"

"I have not that pleasure."

"Ah! we have, have we not, my dear?"

Angela looked smilingly at the younger man. "Yes, it is a portrait of my brother."

"That accounts for its extraordinary vividness," he said with a bow.

At this moment Mrs. Dalrymple came up. "A wonderful painting, my dear, but I dislike your subject, and why you should immortalize that painful expression on Harry's face I cannot imagine. I felt positively ill looking at it. I wanted to go and reassure myself that the poor boy does not really look like that."

"The expression was quite true to life, all the same," said Angela quietly.

"But why choose to paint him at his worst, my dear child?"

"I have merely painted what I saw, and if God sent pain there can be no harm in painting it. I immortalize the work of God."

"I am glad you put in the 'if,'" said a voice behind her, and Angela turned to meet Sir Hugh's clear hazel eyes. She smiled up at him.

"I must defend my poor picture. Remember it was painted while I was still blind."

"I think it is very beautiful," he replied, "and if we can banish that expression of pain for ever we shall have accomplished something."

Mrs. Dalrymple stood by with a slightly bewildered expression, and Angela, remembering her duties, turned and introduced Sir Hugh.

"I was well acquainted with your name in the medical world some years ago, Sir Hugh," said Mrs. Dalrymple, pleasantly. "Your friends must be glad to have you back again in such excellent health."

"I believe they are. I think I had the pleasure of knowing your son in the old days; he was a friend of Harry Leslie's, was he not?"

"Yes, they are very old friends. Arthur is now a clergyman, you know."

"Indeed! I had not heard. Is he here?"

"Oh, yes." Then seeing Arthur at a little distance from them, she beckoned him across.

Angela watched the introduction with an odd feeling of excitement, and unconsciously she compared the two men as they stood together. Arthur was undeniably the better looking of the two; indeed, his dark, clean-shaven face was above the average good looking, but her eyes finally rested on the other man. He was taller than Arthur. That seemed to be his only advantage, but something in his bearing and in the clear directness of his eyes impressed Angela again, as it had that first night of their meeting, with unusual confidence. He seemed to be essentially a man you could trust.

Gradually the crowded room began to empty, and after a little none of the guests were left but Arthur and his sister. Angela was about to slip away to her usual refuge,

the library, when outside the drawing-room door Arthur detained her.

He looked rather pale and his voice sounded a little odd when he spoke.

"Angela, I want to speak to you."

The girl's heart sank, and reluctantly she led the way towards the studio.

"Angela," he burst out, as soon as the door closed on them, "you know what I want to say. I love you. I have loved you for years. You won't let your religious views come between us, dear? Come to me, and together we will solve the problems."

"Oh, Arthur, please, please don't," implored the girl. "I am so sorry. I would have spared you this if I could, indeed I would. What you ask is quite impossible."

"Dearest, you are thinking of our disagreements. I am sure they will all vanish when we really are together. Don't let that come between us."

"I was not thinking of them; if I loved you I would risk that."

"If—you loved me, Angela?"

"Yes, Arthur; but I don't. I am very sorry, but I cannot care for you like that," she replied with a trembling voice.

Arthur suddenly turned very pale. That it would not be easy to win her he had foreseen on account of her odd views, but that she did not love him had somehow never entered his head. For the moment the blow seemed crushing. He passed his hand across his eyes and turned away to the window to hide his face.

For some moments there was silence, then Angela crossed the room and gently laid her hand on his arm. She was desperately sorry for him, she was fond enough of him to be really grieved at the pain she was inflicting, and, when he turned, her eyes were full of tears. A lingering hope shot up into his eyes as he caught her hands in his.

"Must it be—no, Angela?" he murmured imploringly.

"Yes, Arthur dear, it must. I am very

sorry to hurt you so, but I should hurt you more if I accepted you, feeling as I do."

"Are you sure you are not letting your religious ideas come between us, dear?"

"No; though I think they always will. I cannot love you like that, fond of you though I am."

"You are fond of me?" eagerly. "Don't you think it might grow into love? I will wait for you for years, if you will let me hope."

But Angela shook her head. "It is useless, Arthur. I know I shall not change. I can only repeat I am very sorry."

For a moment she felt her hands crushed tightly in his, then he dropped them and seemed to pull himself together.

"Please then forget what I have said, Angela. You will not let it spoil our friendship."

"Of course not, you will always be my friend."

"Thank you, dear, and now I think I will

go. You are going to Hollydene to-morrow, are you not?"

"Yes, with Harry. We shall probably be there all the summer. When we meet again we are the good old friends that we have always been?"

"Yes, dear. Good-bye." And with one lingering glance he turned away and left her.

XIII

HOLLYDENE had been the countryplace of the Leslies for several generations. It was not a very large place, having originally been used as a hunting lodge; but it was old and picturesque. Once long ago it had been a Manor Farm, but the Manor had long since fallen to ruin, and, save for the ancient woodwork, still preserved, the house bore little resemblance to the original farm.

It was surrounded by a fine old-fashioned garden, of the kind that has made the county of Surrey famous, laid out long ago by the former matrons of the house of Leslie. A velvet lawn stretched away, to be lost in the archways and trelliswork of a dainty rose garden. Long walks with well-filled borders on either hand extended in different directions. Beautiful solid green hedges, with

here and there a quaint design carved out on them to mark an entrance to some mysterious shrubbery or some unexpected shady nook, enclosed the whole, while away to one side a little copse bordered a stretch of woodland, and on the other a high brick wall gave promise of a spacious fruit garden.

Away behind the house rose a tall hill crested with the dark plumes of a group of pines, and, in front, beyond the lawn and hedge, was a vista of green meadow-land broken only by the tiny point of a church spire and the red roofs of a little village.

The house itself was long and low, its white plaster and almost black woodwork, surmounted by red tiles, being thrown into relief by the dark background. The original farm kitchen was now the hall and was the principal living-room of the house. On either side were doors with wooden latches leading on the one hand to an old-world chintz-clad drawing-room, and on the other to a kind of library or smoking-room, which had just now

been converted into a sleeping apartment for Harry. A wide oak staircase went up at the far end, and was lost sight of on the landing above.

The whole was furnished very simply and mostly with furniture that was in harmony with the place, but also with a view to comfort, deep armchairs and piles of cushions being found everywhere.

At the end of June everything was looking at its best, and the rather neglected air that it had worn when the Leslies arrived a month ago had quite vanished, and given place to a cheerful inhabited look that was far more attractive.

To Angela that month had passed with extraordinary quickness, and now, as she sat under the big tree on the lawn on this hot afternoon, her thoughts went back over the past few weeks, while over the book that she was pretending to read she took covert glances at her brother.

Harry lay on a long basket chair, his head

leaning against a light-coloured cushion that threw into relief his dark hair and complexion. The face, though still showing the deep lines that marked the ravages of pain, no longer bore that intense suffering look it had previously worn, and a more healthy colour seemed to have crept into the pale clear skin. As he lay back now with eyes closed in a light sleep, he looked like any ordinary invalid recovering from an illness. Beside him on the grass lay a pair of crutches. To Angela they spoke of a tremendous step on the road to recovery and filled her heart with unlimited hope for the future.

The first week had been of terrible trial for all of them. The journey had apparently knocked Harry up completely, and, in spite of all Hugh could do to cheer and encourage them, the spirits of his patient, and of Angela, had gone down to zero.

Harry had kept his room, seemingly quite incapable of rising above the fatigue and pain occasioned by the unusual exertion, and his

sister had been a prey to the most awful doubts.

On the fifth day he had appeared, looking terribly ill and worn, but with his spirits once more recovered, and from that time onward he seemed to have been gradually regaining health and strength.

They were a very happy, peaceful trio. The life they led was extremely simple and very quiet, but it was full of interest to them all.

Every morning after breakfast Hugh would come down to the hall armed with his Bible, the text-book, and the quarterly, and then together they would all do the lesson for the day. Long talks and much study would follow, and then Angela would leave the two men together so that Hugh could give his patient the daily treatment.

Harry, lying on his couch in the window, would open his copy of the book at the page previously mentioned by Hugh, but before he had read many lines his eyes used to wander to the figure seated at the table, and he would

watch the expressive face with increasing interest and pleasure.

He had become curiously attached to his healer in the past month. They had been firm friends in the old days, until ill health had caused them to drift apart, and now that they had come together again the old bond had been renewed with added strength. No doubt his confidence in the man himself was a help to Hugh, but Harry instinctively felt that it was something entirely beyond and outside the personality of the man that was at work during those quiet morning hours.

Gradually all pain had left him and under Hugh's guidance he had found courage to make a first effort to move about with a pair of crutches.

The joy of being able to get about once more had been intense, and his eagerness to see the old garden and all his favourite haunts had very soon made him quite familiar with their use.

The first attempt had been made in the pri-

vacy of his own room with only Hugh to assist, and then one day he had astonished Angela by walking into the hall with them. To both of them that had been a red-letter day never to be forgotten, and from that moment neither of them ever doubted that the day would dawn when he would be restored to perfect health.

Angela was roused from her reverie by a movement from her brother; he had opened his eyes and was stretching his arms luxuriously above his head.

"Have I been asleep?" he asked with a yawn.

Angela laid aside her book. "Yes, you must have slept for at least an hour; it's nearly tea-time."

"By Jove, it is grand to be lying out here; much better than town, isn't it?"

"I should think so; but I suppose the mater and Gertrude don't."

"They haven't said anything about coming down, have they?" anxiously.

"No, I believe they have arranged for all sorts of visits first. Ever since you told them you wanted to fill the house for the shooting they have been busy fixing up things and don't intend coming here until September."

"I'm glad of that, Angela. I wonder if I shall be able to carry a gun on the 12th?"

"Yes, I feel sure you will."

"My hat! The mater would have a fit, wouldn't she?"

"Yes, I think she would. She would be rather astonished if she saw you now, I think. I wish you had told her, though, Harry."

"My dear girl, what would have been the use? You know the mere mention of Christian Science is like a red rag to a bull. Do you remember that morning she brought me in the paper and said the Scientists ought to be dealt with as murderers? There would only have been the devil's own row, which would have done no good, and then all their evil thoughts would have been fastened on poor old Hugh and have added tenfold to his

task, which is, I am sure, hard enough as it is. Now if she sees me well once more she will at any rate not quarrel with the means by which the most desirable end has been attained. I flatter myself that if there is one being in the world the mater is fond of, it is myself."

"Yes, that's true; perhaps you are right. But suppose they heard about it before you are quite well, what then?"

"As I said before, there would be the devil's own row, and we should have to meet it with all the Science that we have at our disposal."

"Well, let us hope we shall not be called upon. There is the postman, I'll go and see whom the letters are for."

She rose slowly from her lounge chair and went across the lawn, disappearing into the house through an open window. She had not been gone more than a few minutes before Sir Hugh appeared from the vicinity of the woods.

"Where have you been?" asked Harry, as Hugh flung himself down on the grass beside his patient's chair.

"Down in the woods. I don't know why, but I always feel I can study better out of doors. Most people find the sights and sounds of nature distracting, don't they? I always seem to get a clearer grasp of things in the open."

"Have you been studying all the afternoon?"

"Yes, more or less. I hope you have, too."

"No, I haven't. I've been asleep."

"Well! that's all right. Where is your sister? I thought it was tea-time."

"It must be somewhere thereabouts, because the post has just come. Angela went in to get the letters."

"Here she comes," remarked Hugh, and the two men were silent as the girl slowly crossed the lawn towards them. Hugh's eyes were fixed on the dainty muslin-clad figure with an expression that did not escape Harry. For

some time he had had his suspicions that Sir Hugh was falling in love with his beautiful sister, but at present Hugh himself was quite unconscious of it, and Harry was not at all anxious to open his eyes just yet.

Angela drew near with a handful of letters.

"One for each of you," she called gaily, "and the rest for me."

Hugh rose and held out his hand, and the girl passed him one of the letters, tossed another to her brother, then sitting down proceeded to open the two addressed to herself. Having carefully read the first of the two missives, she looked up at her companions. Hugh was lying on the grass absorbed in the perusal of a closely written page; Harry had tossed his letter aside and his eyes met those of his sister as she glanced across at him.

"What's up?" he asked.

"This is from Arthur," replied the girl, colouring slightly; "he says Sybil has been awfully seedy the last few days and he wants to know if he may send her down to us for a bit."

"Well! why not?"

"Do you think we ought to let her come?"

"Ought to let her come? Why on earth not?"

"Well, you know what they think about Christian Science." She looked apologetically at Hugh, who smiled back at her.

"Good Lord! Christian Science won't hurt the poor child."

"I know it won't, but you must remember that is not everyone's view of it."

"At all events, my dear Angela, whatever their views may be, Christian Science can do no harm, and there is no need for Sybil to study the subject if she doesn't want to."

"No, of course she needn't. What do you think, Sir Hugh?"

"As Harry says, there is no need for Miss Dalrymple to study the subject if she does not want to, and I do not think any harm will be done by your letting her come to stay. I will promise not to make any attempt to convert her, if you like," with a smile.

"Very well, I will write and tell her to come." Angela had got so accustomed to asking this man's advice that she never noticed that it was always he who settled any debated question. The arrival of tea at that moment interrupted them and no more was said on the subject.

A couple of days later Sybil arrived. As Angela drove to the station to meet her, she felt rather nervous. She was not at all sure of the way in which Sybil would take the situation, and she was not at all sure that she wanted a fourth to the party. The three of them had been so happy during the past month, she did not want their peace disturbed.

But when she actually saw the girl all such thoughts vanished, and she was glad they had told her to come. Sybil looked utterly tired out. The unusual heat and the rush of the season together, had evidently been too much for her. The usually childish face looked old and worn, and the dark eyes seemed too large for her pale face.

"What have you been doing to yourself?" exclaimed Angela as she embraced her with much warmth.

"Oh! going the pace," laughed Sybil without much mirth.

During the drive home they talked little beyond asking questions about their mutual friends and different relatives. Sybil was obviously very tired and said her head ached. She had come by a late train, and when they reached Hollydene it was just dinner-time. Neither of the men was for the moment visible and Angela took her visitor straight to her room. There, catching sight of her face in the glass, Sybil announced her intention of going straight to bed, saying she did not wish the men to see her looking such a scarecrow.

Angela was very much relieved. Christian Science had not been mentioned and she knew that the men had left it to her to introduce the subject. She was unaccountably nervous and was glad to have their talk put off until the morning.

She sent Sybil up a choice little dinner, and came and sat with her afterwards; then having tucked her up and left her to sleep with a parting injunction that she was to stay in bed in the morning, she went down to join the men with a rather vague feeling of unrest.

XIV

THE following morning Sybil obeyed Angela's instructions and remained in bed to breakfast; and, except for a flying visit when she herself got up, Angela did not see her until after the daily lesson and instruction was over; then she went upstairs.

Sybil looked much better than she had the night before, and was thoroughly enjoying her lazy morning, basking luxuriously in the sunshine like some young animal. She assured her hostess that her headache had quite gone, and that she felt better already for the lovely air and the prospect of having nothing to do.

Angela was just wondering how she should introduce her subject, when Sybil gave her the opportunity by asking a question.

"Has Sir Hugh done Harry any real good since you came here, do you think?"

"Yes. I think you will be very much surprised at the improvement. He is much better."

"Has he got some weird and wonderful treatment, then? Or how has he managed it?"

"He has a very wonderful treatment."

"What is it? Electricity?"

"No, much more wonderful than electricity—Christian Science."

"Christian Science!" Sybil shot up into a sitting position; then after a pause: "Well, I'm blessed!"

For some moments she sat gazing at Angela in a sort of stupefied amazement; then suddenly she broke into a peal of laughter.

"What are you laughing at?" asked her friend.

"I was just thinking what a pleasant little surprise this would be for Arthur;" and she went off into another burst of merriment.

But Angela did not laugh, she felt after what had passed it would not be fair for her to laugh at Arthur; but she could not suppress a smile as Sybil went on:

"My dear Angela, if Arthur knew that I had come down here to a nest of heretics he would be off his head. It was rather deep of you not to tell us."

"Harry did not want anyone to know."

"And he is really better?"

"Yes, he is much better, you will see for yourself."

"And is Sir Hugh a bona fide Christian Scientist?"

"Yes."

"How lovely. I have always wanted to meet one. Does he sit and hold Harry's hand and pray over him?"

"I have not observed him holding his hand at present," said Angela, rather irritated at the girl's obvious amusement.

"I shouldn't have thought Harry was the sort to give himself up to another person's

will. I always thought he was rather strong-minded."

"I assure you there is no question of giving up his will to any person, that has nothing to do with it."

"Oh! come now, Angela; I think you half believe in it yourself."

"I most certainly do."

"What? not seriously?"

"Yes, quite seriously. It is not a subject that I am likely to jest over."

Sybil gazed at her companion in silence for a moment, then once more ejaculated, "Well! I'm blessed!"

Presently she remarked more to herself than to Angela: "Sir Hugh must be a wonderful person to have converted you both so soon. I didn't notice anything remarkable about him when we met, either. I wonder how he does it." Then, as Angela did not speak, she asked: "Do you think he will convert me?"

"I shouldn't be at all surprised."

Another pause, then:

"I say, Angela, you won't expect me to try and learn it, will you?"

"My dear child, we shall not expect you to do anything you don't want to, but part of our time every day is given up to the study of Christian Science and we shall continue that no matter who is here, so I thought I had better explain beforehand. There will be plenty of ways in which you can amuse yourself, never fear. Now I am going to leave you to get up, or you won't be down to lunch."

Luncheon proved a lively meal. Sybil came down late, looking girlish and pretty in her fresh cotton frock. Harry was already installed in his long chair by the window and greeted her in his usual bantering way, chaffing her on her pale complexion and drawing her out about all the London gaieties. Between them they kept up a most amusing chatter which greatly entertained Hugh, who had rarely seen his patient in so lively a mood.

It was a very hot day and after lunch Angela suggested that chairs and books on the lawn would be the most suitable way of passing the afternoon, at any rate until tea-time. She provided Sybil with a new novel, and the two of them went out into the shady garden and settled themselves in some comfortable chairs to enjoy the glorious weather.

"I like your Christian Scientist," remarked Sybil after a little. "He has such straight kind eyes, and a jolly laugh, but I'm rather disappointed that he is not more mysterious looking. I thought on closer inspection he would have dreamy dark eyes, or something weird about him. But they are as clear as day, and he doesn't look as if he would hurt a fly."

"I am quite sure he would not."

"Are you? Well, if he does not look as if he would hurt a fly, he does look as if he would play tennis. He looks splendidly athletic at any rate. Why don't you get a court

marked out? I suppose Christian Scientists play tennis?"

"I suppose they do, I never asked him. You see it wouldn't have been much good for him and me to play, he is sure to be very good."

"We shan't be very even as it is, but I dare say you and I could beat him if we tried, or perhaps you can fish up an odd man in the neighbourhood. What a pity Harry cannot play, he used to be great."

"Perhaps he will be again."

Sybil looked at Angela with a rather pitying glance and turned away with a little sigh. She was tremendously devoted to her artist-friend, and she felt sorry that these hopes had been raised in her, for of course no one could ever really cure Harry.

Then suddenly she gave a little gasp and dropped the book she had been holding in her hand. Across the lawn two figures were coming towards them, one the well-knit graceful

figure of Sir Hugh, the other a tall form supported by crutches.

Angela affected not to notice the girl's surprise, but she was secretly revelling in it, and though she could not dim the light that would always come to her eyes as she noted her brother's growing strength, she apparently watched their approach with the utmost unconcern.

Harry, quite forgetting that his appearance like this might be a cause for surprise, was talking with Hugh in the merriest manner possible. Then he suddenly caught sight of Sybil's face and went off into a fit of laughter.

"Yes, it really is me," he observed when he could speak, "not a spook. Don't you think it is splendid?"

But Sybil still gazed in speechless amazement. And with a little assistance from Hugh, Harry lowered himself into his long chair and settled himself comfortably against the cushions.

"Don't stare like that," he remarked gaily,

"it's embarrassing, not to say rude. I forgot I ought to have prepared you for shocks. I'm sorry. I hope it won't prove fatal."

But Sybil was now gazing fascinated at Sir Hugh.

"How did you do it?" she asked at last.

"I didn't do it," he answered, smiling.

"Rubbish! of course you did," answered Sybil briskly. "Was it hypnotism?"

"Certainly not," laughing.

"It's just faith then?"

"Oh, no, it isn't."

"But it must be one or the other."

"I assure you it is neither the one nor the other."

"Oh, you just say that because you want to be mysterious; perhaps you call it the power of suggestion or something of that sort?"

"No, I don't, I call it Christian Science."

"Oh, yes, I know that; that's only just a name to make it sound like something new; the cures are done by hypnotism or something, really, of course."

"If you know all about it," remarked Harry, "we need not trouble to explain, need we?"

"I don't know all about it; but anyone knows that people can't perform miracles nowadays and that all these things can be accounted for somehow."

"Why, yes, of course," answered Hugh; "there is no difficulty in accounting for Christian Science; it is simply the power of divine Love."

Sybil gave him a most engaging smile. "I suppose we attribute all power to divine Love primarily," she remarked, "but there are a good many other names by which we generally account for things."

"Consequently when they are attributed to divine Love people won't believe it," said Harry, laughing.

"I didn't say I didn't believe it. I only asked for the everyday name for it."

"There, I'm afraid I cannot help you," said Hugh. "I know no other name by which to

call it. But if you want to study its methods we have plenty of literature on the subject between us all."

"Thanks very much, but I expect it is too deep for me. I'm not very clever."

"Oh, there is no need for cleverness to be a Christian Scientist. I have nearly become one, and I've no brains to speak of," said Harry.

"You haven't really?"

"Haven't really what? Any brains?"

"No," impatiently, "haven't really become a Christian Scientist?"

"I haven't got there yet, but I have every hope of doing so before long."

"You really mean it?"

"Yes," gravely, "I really mean it."

Sybil shrugged her shoulders. "I can't understand it," she said.

"Perhaps you have not tried," said Hugh.

"Some day perhaps you may," said Harry gently.

"Suppose you get yourself a seat, Hugh; the

ground is a charming couch for a short time, but apt to get a bit hard," addressing his friend.

"Thanks, but I must not stay here in idleness," was the answer, as Hugh slowly got to his feet. "I am going down to my favourite bit of wood, so I will say au revoir until tea-time," and he strolled away whistling across the lawn.

The first week of Sybil's stay passed too quickly for all of them. None of the other three regretted the advent of the girl in spite of her want of sympathy with their views of Christian Science. She quite refused to study the books, and whenever opportunity offered she teased and chaffed, but always with such good humour that none of them minded in the least. Often, however, she would stay in the hall and listen while they did the lesson in the morning, and, in spite of herself, would become interested in the long talks and discussions always indulged in by the two men.

Harry was growing better every day, feel-

ing had begun to return to the helpless limbs; and Sybil was often lost in wonder at what she saw.

But apart from all this she had made the little party very gay. It was she who discovered that Sir Hugh could both sing and play beautifully, and also persuaded Harry to try his voice once more, for in the old days he had been fond of singing. Then she superintended the marking of a tennis court, and the three of them had many a heated conflict while Harry looked on and applauded. She made Harry read aloud to her on the hot afternoons and Sir Hugh take her for walks in the cool evenings. She went sketching with Angela in the mornings, and was altogether the life of the whole party.

She had very soon got over the fatigue and lassitude which were so apparent on her arrival, and she had not once expressed regret at missing so much of the season, much less a desire to return to town.

She struck up quite a warm friendship with

Sir Hugh, who was very much amused with her, and welcomed the extremely healthy and cheerful element she brought to his patient, which seemed to have redoubled his determination to get well if possible.

The two were often together, and in the hot afternoons when Harry was supposed to be reading aloud to her, Sybil would frequently take away the book and lead him on to discuss Christian Science and other intimate subjects. She had got very quick, too, at helping him with his crutches, and they would stroll about the old garden recalling childhood's days when she was a tiny child and he just growing up to manhood.

To Harry these were golden hours. Thoughts and dreams, that had been kept sternly in check by an iron will, were now allowed once more to see the light; hope was strong within him; life was strong within him; and he wanted to enjoy every moment of it to the full to make up for all those wasted years that had gone before.

XV

IT was early in July, and in between a couple of visits Mrs. Leslie and Gertrude were spending a few days at the house in town. It was intensely hot, and in spite of blinds and open windows the atmosphere in the big drawing-rooms had become quite unbearable, so they had betaken themselves to the library, which seemed to be the coolest room in the house.

They had just finished tea and Mrs. Leslie was lying on the couch with a paper in her hand pretending to read while she tried vainly to keep her eyes open, and Gertrude in a deep leather chair drawn up to the open window was reading a novel.

They both started at the sound of voices, and Mrs. Leslie hastily put her feet to the floor as the butler announced the Dalrymples.

Mrs. Dalrymple sailed in to the room with

an unusual air of importance, and it was obvious that the heat of the day alone was not enough to account for her vivid complexion and agitated demeanour. Arthur followed in her wake, looking very pale and worried, and both the occupants of the room rose from their seats with the same exclamation:

"What is the matter?"

Mrs. Leslie herself had changed colour, for her thoughts had instantly flown to the son she adored, but she remained perfectly calm while Mrs. Dalrymple sank into a chair.

"We have some very serious news for you, my dear," said the latter, shaking her head.

Mrs. Leslie gripped the tea table.

"Not Harry?" she asked quickly.

"It concerns Harry, yes."

"He is not worse?"

"No, no dear Mrs. Leslie," interrupted Arthur, seeing her sudden look of distress, "we have not had any bad news from Hollydene, but there is something else we have heard that has distressed us very much."

Mrs. Leslie looked relieved but extremely curious.

"What is it?" she asked.

"Well, we—that is—er——" Mrs. Dalrymple stopped and looked appealingly at her son, standing on the rug before the grate.

"I was staying last night with some friends down the river," began Arthur, gravely, "for the purpose of preaching at their church. Before the service we all went to dine with some people at a big house close by. I took my hostess in to dinner and in the course of our conversation I discovered that she was a relation of Sir Hugh Rivers." He paused and looked at his audience as if he expected some remark, but no one spoke.

"Did you ever inquire into the religious views held by Sir Hugh?" he asked, turning to Mrs. Leslie.

"Why, no, I'm afraid I did not," she answered, feeling rather uncomfortable.

"Then you were not aware that he is a Christian Scientist?"

Both ladies shot out of their chairs simultaneously, and Mrs. Leslie's voice rose in a shrill scream as she echoed his last words:

"A Christian Scientist!"

"Yes, a Christian Scientist, and it is to teach Harry his heretic views and to practise this so-called healing that he has gone down to Hollydene."

"Good Heavens! My dear Arthur, this is awful. Do you mean that my poor boy is at the mercy of this man at Hollydene? What is to be done? Why, these Christian Scientists are little better than murderers. Just think of it, he may be putting Harry to the most awful torture by refusing to let him have the doctor; the poor boy may die. I must go at once."

"Nonsense, mother," put in Gertrude impatiently; "even if Sir Hugh is a Christian Scientist, he was a doctor first, so he is not likely to let Harry die. The healing is done by hypnotism, really, isn't it?" turning to Arthur.

"Something of the sort. Suggestion and will power, I suppose."

"In any case a most dangerous practice which we must put a stop to, and the sooner the better. I should not think Harry was easily hypnotized, he is very strong willed."

"That is just the danger," said Mrs. Leslie; "and while he is trying to obtain power over him, he will refuse to let him have the doctor or use any of his old remedies, and the poor boy will suffer untold agonies. I've heard of these cases so often, and we know poor Harry can never be cured, all the doctors have said so."

"And it's dreadful to think of him dying in slow torture," put in Mrs. Dalrymple with a shudder, "like that man in the paper the other day."

"Oh! don't," implored Mrs. Leslie; "I must go at once."

"You cannot go to-night, my dear mother," said the practical Gertrude; "besides, what good could you do? Harry is of age, he has

every right to try Christian Science or any other heresy he fancies. It would be no good just going there to try and force him to give it up; he is probably already in Sir Hugh's power; he had a wonderfully strong personality. We must think of some way to go to work. Do you know anything about Christian Science, Arthur?"

"I have read Mrs. Eddy's book and I know quite enough to recognize that it is the most dangerous heresy of the age."

"Yes, it undoubtedly is; and there are those two girls, Angela and Sybil, probably listening with all their ears while Sir Hugh preaches. Oh! how iniquitous it is of him to deceive us like this."

"It's a regular plot," said Mrs. Leslie, who was now reduced to tears. "How could Angela be so wicked."

"And poor little Sybil, too," put in Mrs. Dalrymple; "a child like that to be landed right among them all. They had no right to let her stay."

"Sybil is very young yet and there will be little difficulty in pointing out any error to her," remarked Arthur. "It is of Angela I am thinking most, she has been very unsettled lately." He walked away to the window to hide his emotion.

Mrs. Dalrymple looked annoyed. "In Sybil's youth lies her danger; a girl at that age is so impressionable. However, she must come back immediately. I shall wire for her at once."

"Don't you think that would be very unwise?" said Gertrude. "You could not explain in a telegram, and Sybil would be very annoyed at having her visit cut short like that. I think the best arrangement would be for you, mother, to go down there to-morrow and take Arthur with you; you can in any case bring the girls back, and Arthur must see what he can do with Harry. If Sir Hugh persists in remaining, stay there yourself, he can hardly continue to prolong his visit under those circumstances."

"That sounds a reasonable arrangement," said Mrs. Dalrymple. "If Arthur goes he can bring Sybil away with him; there can be no question of her refusing then; she is under age and Arthur is her guardian."

"Very well. I presume you are willing to accompany me, Arthur?" said Mrs. Leslie.

Arthur was lost in a brown study at the window and was recalled sharply to himself by his mother.

"Arthur, Mrs. Leslie is asking you if you will go to Hollydene with her to-morrow."

"Yes, of course I will," but his voice lacked any enthusiasm at the prospect, as he turned back into the room.

"And I wish you to use your authority if necessary and insist on your sister returning with you. I will not have her left there."

"I quite understand, I will bring Sybil home."

"And, Arthur," put in Gertrude, "I hope you will use your influence with Angela. As you remarked just now, her religious views

have been most unsettled of late, and a heresy of this kind is just the sort of thing to attract her. She is never easy to persuade, but if you can convince her with arguments it will be all right. You had better get up these Christian Science arguments; Sir Hugh is sure to have them all at his fingers' ends, and he is a very clever man."

"I suppose he is, but I hope we are worrying ourselves unnecessarily and that he may not have succeeded in converting any of them to his way of thinking."

"None of you seem to think of poor Harry, and the probable torture Sir Hugh is inflicting on him," said Mrs. Leslie tearfully.

"I had not forgotten Harry," said Arthur, gravely, "but to me the spiritual side naturally occurs first, and the girls seemed to me to be in the most imminent danger."

"I suppose Harry has a soul to be saved too, hasn't he?"

"Of course he has, dear Mrs. Leslie, but Harry is a strong man, and——"

"A strong man!" interrupted Mrs. Leslie, "What nonsense you talk, Harry is an invalid."

"Arthur means mentally, my dear mother," said Gertrude, "and consequently he is not so easily to be won over as the girls. It is odd," she went on, turning to Arthur, "that you should have said that, because I never think of Harry as an invalid when I am not with him; he is naturally such a strong-minded person, that is why I cannot believe that he would ever allow Sir Hugh or any other man to play tricks with him."

"It seems unlikely, certainly, but these Christian Scientists are increasing tremendously there is no doubt, and I believe a number of quite clever men have joined them. Of course there is no doubt there have been some marvellous cases of healing among them, and these things always have to reckoned with in our efforts to combat their errors."

"Oh, I think their idea of mind over matter is quite good," said Gertrude; "where the

danger of the thing comes in, is in their refusal to believe in the church."

"Yes, it is one of those lies that is half a truth and consequently doubly dangerous and most difficult to fight against," added Arthur.

"It is an invention of the devil," said Mrs. Leslie, "and their horrible murderous practices ought to be prevented by law. I remember those were the very words I used speaking to Harry one day, and he said it was a free country and if a few people more or less died what did it matter; he must have known about it then."

"Oh, he has probably been discussing it ever since Sir Hugh came to see him first," said Arthur. "I believe they rarely miss an opportunity of taking a case."

"But no amount of hypnotism could ever cure Harry," volunteered Gertrude, "so I should have thought it was rather unwise to attempt a case of the kind."

"Yes, but those are just the cases where the patient dies," said Mrs. Leslie, "and then they

say it was not their fault, he would have died anyhow. It's awful, awful!"

"It is awful," replied Arthur. "Why people must need start a fresh religion and worship Mrs. Eddy I cannot understand. The church has lasted all these hundreds of years; surely if it has been good enough for all these ages it is good enough to-day."

"Oh! it's the craze for something new in religion as well as in everything else," said Mrs. Dalrymple; "there must be a fashion even in religion."

"It's dreadful!" exclaimed Gertrude. "How people can be so disloyal to the church I cannot conceive. People like these Christian Scientists do away with all the beauty of the church's creed for the trickery of physical healing, and because they succeed in that they think all the rest of the teaching must be true. There is plenty of healing done by the church if they only knew it, but we don't blazon it abroad at all times."

"Nevertheless," said Arthur, "I think the

church will have some difficulty in accounting for the lost art of healing, which these people claim to have recovered. To me it is sufficient that as science advanced, supernatural power was less needed, but with people who say they have revived the old power, that will not of course go down."

"But faith healing goes on everywhere," interjected Gertrude.

"Yes, but the cases in the church are few and far between, it is not a regular system like these Scientists go in for. I think that something will have to be done by the church to restore this gift to her people."

"It is of course greater faith that is needed," said Gertrude. "If people would only have faith, what could not the church accomplish."

Arthur sighed. "As the Bishop said the other night," he remarked, "it is a material age and everyone clamours for proof. But there is a wonderful religious revival abroad in the world just now which must quicken the

life of the church, and with her inrush of new life she will go forth and conquer these heresies and bring her children back to the fold, please God."

"But what we have to think of now," said Mrs. Leslie, "is what is to be done with our own particular heretics. I'm afraid we cannot wait for the inrush of life into the church, we must make our plans at once. You two had better stay here and dine and we can look up trains and things. If you'll excuse me I will go and give some orders. Gertrude will take you upstairs," turning to Mrs. Dalrymple; and then to Arthur: "I think you will find some cigarettes in that box on the mantelpiece."

After the three ladies had left the room Arthur lighted a cigarette and began pacing up and down with a troubled face. He did not deceive himself with regard to his influence over Angela and Harry, he knew he had none; and what he had heard about Sir Hugh had caused him much disquiet, for his hostess

of last night had imparted to him knowledge which he had not thought fit to pass on to his mother and the others. For instance, she had told him that it was to Christian Science that Sir Hugh owed his now splendid health; and then he had been compelled to listen to this man's praises half through dinner, for though his hostess herself was no Scientist, she was very devoted to this cousin who was, and his fine character and noble life were themes that seemed to cause her unfailing interest. She did not even deplore the fact of his being a heretic and said quite openly that no man who led such a good life could be far from God whatever form of religion he professed.

To Arthur such broad-mindedness was inconceivable; he believed that unless a person conformed to the church's creed they could not indeed be saved, and it was a matter of real grief and agony to him that the girl he loved, and her brother, who was his oldest friend, should have become heretics; for in his own mind he had no doubt whatever that that

was the meaning of Harry's sudden determination to go to Hollydene. He must have been convinced of the truth of Sir Hugh's teaching before he came to such a momentous decision.

With regard to Angela, he still dared to hope, for he knew, only too well, how earnestly she would study and how necessary it would be to prove the teaching to her. But Sir Hugh was a clever man, and he had an extraordinarily attractive personality; then Angela's love for her brother was so great that his influence would weigh enormously with her, if he ever tried to exert it. Sybil hardly entered his thoughts, he could use his authority to bring her away, and with very little trouble he could bring her to her senses when he got her home.

For the first time in his life Arthur felt the need of a firmer faith in his own life, and that evening, after taking his mother back to their home and saying good-night, he let himself quietly out again and walked through the

moonlit London streets to his church in the East End; and there in a spirit of deep humility he spent the night in prayer for strength and faith to deal with the trial before him on the morrow.

XVI

THE following day was hot and fine like its predecessor, and the party at Hollydene, all unconscious of the invasion that was coming, were enjoying it to the full.

They had just collected on the lawn for tea. Angela was leaning back in her favourite garden chair with an expression of serene contentment on her fair face, and almost at her feet lay Sir Hugh, stretched full length on the grass, his hands clasped behind his head. In a hammock, swung on a long wooden stand, Sybil reclined, a box of chocolates resting on her knees, while close beside her on his long invalid chair lay Harry, smoking between the intervals of catching chocolates which Sybil was idly throwing at his open mouth.

"I wish they would buck up with the tea,"

The party at Hollydene, all unconscious of the invasion that was coming.

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remarked Sybil presently; "I could drink a bucketful."

"Shall we order one for you?" suggested Harry.

Sybil did not deign to reply, but took careful aim with a chocolate at Sir Hugh's nose. He started up with a laugh, demolishing the chocolate as he did so.

"I couldn't help it," apologized Sybil, "it was too tempting. What were you dreaming about? But perhaps I am too material to understand?"

"Not by any means. I was thinking at that moment how absolutely beautiful the sunlight is coming through those trees, and incidentally wishing I was an artist."

"Quite rational for once. By the way, Angela, what are you going to do with your picture? It isn't up for sale, is it?"

"No," said Angela, colouring; "I don't intend to sell it."

"I'm glad of that, it is too good a portrait of Harry for strangers to get hold of. All the

same I doubt if anyone would recognize it now. I must say you look a different being."

"That's right, give the devil his due," laughed Harry.

"Oh! I'm not above owning that Sir Hugh has done wonders, and that I am half inclined to believe in him myself," with a charming smile.

"As long as you think it has anything to do with me personally it won't help you much, I'm afraid," said Hugh.

"Ah! that's your modesty. Here comes the tea, thank goodness!"

"Accompanied by the sound of wheels," said Angela. "Who on earth can be coming here? It can't be visitors, I've long ago got rid of the only possible ones and owe everyone of them calls. Who can it be?"

"By Jove! it's the village cab," announced Harry. "I can see the old white horse through the hedge. It must be someone from the station."

Sybil hastily precipitated herself out of the

hammock. "Someone by train evidently," she remarked. "Am I very untidy?"

There was a chorus of "No, no," and then everyone waited in silence. They heard the grating of the wheels as the cab stopped at the door, and then there was an interval before Andrews appeared at the drawing-room window holding back the curtain for two figures to pass through. At sight of the first, clad in light dust cloak over the black widow's weeds, Angela sprang to her feet, while Harry gave vent to a low whistle and exclaimed:

"The mater, by Jove!"

But Sybil had caught sight of the black-coated figure behind Mrs. Leslie, and her thoughts instantly connected the visit with herself, and the first thing that occurred to her was that something was wrong with her mother. She turned very white and took a step forward, then instinctively she shrank back, almost falling against Harry's chair. He put out his hand to save her and caught sight of her face.

"Why, what's the matter, dear?" he asked quickly, while Angela went forward to meet the newcomers.

"It's Arthur," gasped Sybil, "there must be something wrong."

Harry took her hand and held it tight for a moment. "Reverse that thought quickly," he said gently. "It is all right, I am sure it is."

She looked back into his dark eyes with a sudden feeling of confidence; he spoke with conviction, yet he could not really know, but he gave her a feeling of security; at all events he was there and he was strong. The colour slowly returned to her face and she smiled down at him, then turned away to meet her brother.

Angela was already embracing her mother.

"Why, this is a surprise," she said gaily; "why did you not let us know you were coming?"

"We thought we would catch you unawares and see what you were up to," said Mrs. Leslie,

returning her daughter's embrace. "How is Harry?"

"Oh, much better, you will see. How do you do, Arthur, wasn't it awfully hot travelling down?"

"Yes, very; it is lovely here, though. Ah, Sybil, quite got over the fatigues of town?" and he stooped to kiss his sister.

"Yes, thank you. There is nothing wrong, is there? With mother, I mean?"

"No, no, mother is quite well. You look splendid. Ah! Sir Hugh, how do you do?" as he stepped forward.

"What, Harry, out of doors!" exclaimed Mrs. Leslie. "Isn't this too much for you, my dear boy?"

"Not at all, my dear mater, I am much better. But this is a great surprise. Why didn't you send us a line saying you were coming?"

"I thought it was better not, I only decided last night that I would come when I found that Arthur was willing to accompany me."

"Well, you have just arrived in time for tea," said Angela; "come and sit down, mother, and let me take your cloak."

Sir Hugh came forward to offer his assistance, but Mrs. Leslie cleverly managed to avoid him, and it was Arthur who laid her cloak aside.

"Here comes Andrews with some more tea," said Harry. "We shall want some more chairs, too. If you don't mind the end of this, Sybil, there is plenty of room for you as well as my toes, until Andrews brings another chair."

Sybil with a rather mischievous smile took the proffered seat, and something in Harry's face made Mrs. Leslie's protest die upon her lips.

During tea the conversation was fairly brisk. They discussed the journey down, the heat, and their mutual friends and relatives, but there was a feeling in the air that there was a storm brewing, and it did not escape Angela and her brother that both their guests

were looking extremely harassed and ill at ease.

Harry had instantly divined the true cause of their visit, and had noticed with some amusement his mother's clever avoidance of Sir Hugh. There was going to be a horrible row, he said to himself ruefully, and their happy party would be broken up.

With his usual tact Sir Hugh effaced himself directly tea was over and then Mrs. Leslie proceeded to open the campaign, addressing herself to Harry:

"We have come down here to-day on a matter of grave importance. Only yesterday it came to my knowledge that Sir Hugh Rivers is a Christian Scientist. What was your object in deceiving me like this, Harry?"

"I had no wish to deceive you, mother, but I knew that you had a rooted objection to Christian Science, and after careful consideration I was resolved to give it a trial; to do that fairly I wanted as little opposition as possible, so I asked Hugh to come here with

me, and said nothing to anyone about it; that is all."

"All? and quite enough, too. If the first lesson taught by Christian Science is deception, my rooted objection, as you put it, is not likely to be removed."

"My deception, as you call it, had nothing to do with my Christian Science. I knew next to nothing about it then. Had I known as much of it as I do now, I should not have hesitated to tell you; but I had an idea then that if I came home cured you would be more likely to listen to me."

"And did Sir Hugh hold out hopes to you of being cured?"

"He told me that Christian Science could cure me."

"And you believed him?"

"I am not sure that I believed him then, but I most certainly believe him now."

"It is just as I feared then, he has got you completely in his power. How horrible!"

Harry laughed. "Pray don't distress

yourself, my dear mother, there is nothing mysterious or uncanny about poor old Hugh and I am not in the very slightest degree in his power."

"And you have allowed the girls to listen to all this heresy, to say nothing of teaching Angela to deceive me. I should have thought that you, Angela——"

"I think," interrupted Harry, quietly, but authoritatively, "that the girls had better be left out of the discussion. Anything Angela did, she did for me and at my request and I am answerable. As for Sybil, she came here as our guest, and I can assure you at once that she, at any rate, has not become a Christian Scientist. It would be better, I think, if the girls left us. Would you mind, Sybil?—Angela? and perhaps you might find Sir Hugh and ask him if he would join us presently. I am very sorry, but I think it is best, if you don't mind."

The girls instantly rose and went off together. At another time Angela would have

hesitated to leave her brother, but there was something unusual about him to-day, which spoke of strength and confidence, and that note of authority in his voice, so rarely heard since he had been laid low, impelled obedience.

After the girls had left, Harry turned again to his mother:

"Now then, mother, I am willing to hear anything you have to say. I am sorry that it should have seemed to me necessary to keep you in the dark about my plans; I cannot say more."

"It seems to me, Harry, that you do not in the least realize the gravity of the situation. This Christian Science is a most awful heresy, a thing of the devil; and once you let these Scientists get you into their clutches your soul is no longer your own."

"I am afraid I cannot agree with you, dear mother; I have studied it a good deal during the last few months and I can find nothing in it to justify such an assertion as that."

"But they go entirely contrary to the teaching of the church, and you will admit that that must be wrong."

"There again, I am sorry, but I'm afraid I cannot agree with you. But you must remember I do not believe in the teaching of the church."

"Do not believe the teaching of the church? What nonsense, Harry; you always used to. I am sure you were brought up to believe it all."

"I am sure I was. It is not the fault of my early teaching, you need not distress yourself on that score."

"But why don't you believe it?"

"Because, my dear mother, a great deal of it seems to me contrary to reason. To believe all the church teaches requires a blind faith, and that I do not possess and am unable to cultivate."

"You believe in God, I suppose."

"Yes, certainly."

"And in the Bible?"

"Yes."

"Then whatever more do you want?" exclaimed Mrs. Leslie, triumphantly.

"I don't want anything more, but the church, you see, does."

"I think you are talking a great deal of nonsense," said Mrs. Leslie, impatiently. "If you believe in the Bible, I am sure that is all that is necessary. You were baptized and confirmed in the church, and I don't see how you can help belonging to it."

"I am not responsible for a ceremony performed over me in my infancy, nor for a later one performed on a schoolboy. I don't in the least agree with either of them."

"I never heard anything so absurd. Here you are saying you can't believe in a few simple ceremonies performed by the church, and yet you find no difficulty in swallowing all these Christian Science tales of the miracles they pretend to perform."

"Because they are not miracles; they are a

result of a clear understanding of the principle in which they believe, and which they are able to fully explain."

"Rubbish. They are just hypnotism and nonsense of that kind. How can you let yourself be so deluded, my dear boy?"

"Don't you think this discussion is rather futile, mother? Arthur looks horribly miserable. Wouldn't you rather join the girls, old man? If you want to have a go at me, we can have a talk afterwards," smiling cheerfully.

Arthur had been silently smoking in his chair on the opposite side of the tea-table, and listening attentively to all Harry had to say. Sooner or later he knew they would have to talk things over, and he would need all his reasoning power if he was to be convincing. Now he rose slowly from his chair with an appealing look at Mrs. Leslie that asked her permission to desert, and she nodded her head impatiently.

"Yes, go and talk to the girls," she said, "perhaps you can convince them." Arthur strolled away thankfully.

"Now, mother, I don't think there is anything further to be gained by resuming our discussion. Tell me all about yourself and how it is that you are not paying visits just now," began Harry pleasantly.

But Mrs. Leslie was not so easily put off. "I must discuss this with you, Harry. You don't seem to realize that you are inflicting a great deal of pain and grief on me."

"I am very sorry, if that is so, mother," said Harry gently, and for a moment he laid his hand on hers. "But surely you would be glad to see me restored to my old strong self again, wouldn't you?"

"Of course I should," said Mrs. Leslie, becoming tearful, "but the doctors said you could never be cured, you know they did, and how is it likely that this quackery can accomplish what all the cleverest doctors in London could not do?"

"Now, mother dear, don't cry, and listen to me. You have just said that all the doctors in London said I couldn't be cured; very well, that meant there was nothing for me to do but just go on as I was until I died. Don't interrupt me, you cannot imagine that I enjoyed my life, lying on my back all day long, can you? Very well, don't you think it was natural that when Hugh came along and held out a hope to me that I instantly clutched at it? Remember, I could not be better, and I could not be worse, according to the doctors, and remember, also, that Hugh had been a doctor, and a very clever one to boot; the risk I ran of failure mattered very little, it would leave me very much as I was, but on the other hand there was always the hope of success."

Mrs. Leslie dabbed her handkerchief to her eyes and murmured, "My poor deluded boy."

Harry went on, "That being the case, was it to be wondered at that I determined to try it? and when I tell you that I have been fully justified by the results, perhaps you too will

acknowledge that it is not quite the fraud that you seem to imagine. Do you see these?" With some difficulty he leant over and picked up one of his crutches that had been lying hidden on the ground on the far side of his long chair.

Mrs. Leslie stared rather stupidly at it. "Well?" she ejaculated.

"Yes, it is well," returned Harry, "for by the aid of these crutches I am now able to get about the place with comparative ease and comfort; what do you think of that?" triumphantly.

But to his astonishment, instead of the pleased surprise he had expected, Mrs. Leslie burst into fresh tears.

"Oh dear," she sobbed, "he must indeed be a disciple of the devil; it's worse than I thought."

At this moment Hugh came upon the scene, but seeing Mrs. Leslie in tears, was going to withdraw again, when Harry called him.

"Don't go, Hugh, we want you here. My

mother is persuaded that because I am able to walk about on crutches, it is somehow the work of the devil. Do you think you can persuade her to something different? I don't seem to have any success."

But before Hugh could answer Mrs. Leslie had turned on him.

"It is you we have to thank for all this trouble," she exclaimed. "You first teach my boy to deceive me and then practise your devil's tricks upon me. How you dare stand there I cannot imagine. I wonder you are not ashamed to meet me."

"I have nothing to be ashamed of, Mrs. Leslie," said Sir Hugh quietly, while he silenced Harry with a gesture. "I have never in any way taught Harry or anyone else to deceive, and I do not understand what you allude to as my devil's tricks."

"You understand perfectly well, Sir Hugh. I allude to the quackery you are practising to make him believe he is to be cured, a thing which you, as a doctor, know to be impossible;

and I repeat, you ought to be ashamed of yourself."

"I have practised no quackery, and I myself make no claim to cure Harry or anyone else. All I have done is to make him believe in and realize God, and it is God who is making him whole."

"That is all cant, Sir Hugh, and does not take me in in the very least. You have somehow or other gained the ascendency over my son, and my firm belief is that you are experimenting on him for your own ends, and as his mother, I shall insist on your stopping it at once."

"Mother, I think you have forgotten that Sir Hugh is my guest and I cannot have him insulted even by my mother." Harry's voice was dangerously quiet.

"I forget nothing, Harry, and this is no time to talk of insults, you yourself are helpless in this man's hands and cannot be expected to see the dangers of your position. I can see them and I intend to put a stop to

them, and to that end I must insist on your leaving this house to-morrow, Sir Hugh."

"He will do nothing of the kind," exclaimed Harry passionately. "Hugh came here as my guest, and to my house, and so long as I wish him to remain, he will do so, provided he is willing."

"As I said before, Harry, you are not capable of judging in this matter, you must leave this to me."

"I am capable of being master in my own house, mother, and so you will find. I am sorry that we have displeased you, but I am quite determined to continue my present course of treatment, and if you do not approve I cannot help it; but please understand that I will not have any guest of mine insulted while I am here, and if you are unable to treat Hugh with courtesy, I must ask you to return to town and leave us."

"I shall do nothing of the kind. I intend to remain here, and if Sir Hugh chooses to stay after what I have said he can do so, but

he will practise no nonsense while I am here; that I will see to."

"I have no desire to remain here contrary to your wishes, Mrs. Leslie," said Hugh, in the same quiet unruffled tones. "But as Harry says, I came here as his guest, with a promise to remain as long as he needed me. If he will give me his permission to leave, I will do so; my absence or presence can in no way hinder the completion of his cure."

Mrs. Leslie stared at him in blank amazement. Was the man mad? He looked sane enough. She did not know what to think.

"I will give you no such permission," said Harry hotly. "I wish you to remain here."

"Very well. Sir Hugh has heard what I have to say, he can please himself."

"I must fulfill my promise, of course," said Hugh, "I have no alternative."

"And I think this discussion has already lasted too long," said Harry, who was furious. "If you will give me a hand, Hugh, I'll go in."

In silence Sir Hugh picked up the crutches and placed them in position, and with but little further help, Harry got up and moved away towards the house, while Hugh picked up the rugs and cushions and followed at a little distance.

Mrs. Leslie watched them in sheer amazement. When Harry had picked up the crutch and held it out to her, she had not in the least realized that he really could use them. Now as she watched his tall form swinging along across the lawn, she was speechless with surprise, and for one brief moment the heart of the mother was roused within her and she was overwhelmed with thankfulness. But it was only for a moment; the next instant she realized that all this was the work of the devil, and therefore it was wrong, and with a sigh and a few more tears, she got up and prepared to follow the two young men into the house.

XVII

MRS. LESLIE did not appear at dinner that night; she was too upset with all that had passed, and retired with a bad headache to the room that Angela had had prepared for her.

The meal could hardly be called a success. Both the girls were very apprehensive of what would happen next. Harry was very silent, and though the other two men tried to keep the conversation going, it was obviously rather an effort to them both.

No one was sorry when the meal came to an end. Angela at once went off to her mother and Sybil strolled out into the garden. The three men, or rather, Harry and Arthur, smoked in silence until the dinner had been removed, then, as the door closed on Andrews, Harry turned to Arthur.

"Now then, old man, let us hear what you have to say to us."

"First of all, then, there are certain questions I should like to ask you. You said this afternoon when you were talking to Mrs. Leslie that you did not believe in the teaching of the church. Would you mind telling me what points, especially, you cannot accept?"

"Certainly; first and foremost, I never could accept the peculiar interpretation of the incarnation as preached by the church, or perhaps, I should say, the belief in a personal God."

"What, then, was your conception of God?"

"Certainly not a person, as the term is sometimes understood, but as spirit, a mighty creative force."

"And that is the Christian Science idea of God?" this time addressing Hugh, who was listening attentively.

"Yes, but we go further than that, we call God the only Life, Soul or Mind."

"You believe in all the attributes, while denying the person?"

"Although we say that the term person, as a limited being, does not correctly apply to God, we believe that God is person in an infinite sense. We believe that 'God is Spirit,' as we find it in St. John's gospel as translated by Farrar Fenton."

"Then you did not believe in the divinity of Christ?" turning again to Harry.

"No, I never did, consequently the New Testament was to me only a very beautiful story full of impossibilities."

"You say, 'was,' have you altered your views, now, then?"

"Why, yes. Christian Science has explained to me the incarnation, while letting me keep my infinite God. It has also made it possible for me to believe in the divinity of Christ, and has done away with all that before appeared to me supernatural."

"You mean by all that is supernatural, His miracles, I suppose?"

"Yes."

"Of course, I am fully aware that Christian Science has been the means of curing a great many people, and with that I do not quarrel, I have no wish to doubt their truth; quite the contrary, I very much deplore the fact that the art of healing has been lost by the church, and there I am quite ready to own that the Scientists have taught us a lesson. My quarrel with Christian Science is with its theory of life and substance."

"But you must remember that it is the application of the theory of Christian Science that heals. Its theory and results are inseparable. One of the things that we especially insist on is that he who calls himself a Scientist, must be able to demonstrate his Science by healing the sick as well as in other ways, and to do that it is necessary that he live a pure and good life, for, unless he reflects God, Love, Truth, he cannot do the works without which we are told that faith is dead."

"There again I cannot accept your teach-

ing. Because you are able to effect cures, you say, therefore, the teaching must be true. In that case why deny that medicine and surgery are real?"

"I think you have failed to see my point: we do not say, because we get cures, therefore, the Science is true, but because the Science is true, therefore we get cures. We have our Lord's own word that 'these signs shall follow them that believe: in my name shall they cast out devils: they shall speak with new tongues: they shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover.' Those were to prove their faith, to be the hall-mark of their Christianity; and to-day we demand the same proofs and credentials from the followers of Christian Science."

"I still maintain that your cures prove nothing. There never was a religion yet that did not, at one time or another, effect cures; and everyone is willing to admit the suprem-

acy of mind over matter in these days. I will pass on to another point: I cannot accept the teachings of Christian Science concerning the individuality and mission of Jesus."

"Surely if we are to understand the way, it is only through the teachings of Jesus we can do so. Not that we lay all the stress on the teaching; Christ as the perfect reflection of God, Truth, was truth. The great difference to me is this, that whereas in the church's teaching He was always set so far above, that the ideal was absolutely unobtainable, in Christian Science one is able to understand that the words, 'Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father in heaven is perfect,' were not mere idle words, but were really commands which were meant to be acted upon."

"I cannot see that such a command can be any more real to a Christian Scientist than to a churchman."

"Perhaps not, but to my thinking as long as people are taught to believe in the power of evil and that God sends sickness and pain,

the ideal must always remain far beyond their reach."

"I do not think so, and that brings me to another point. We believe in the doctrine of atonement, which was the one great sacrifice for the sins of the whole world, and which makes it possible for us to overcome sin."

"We do not believe," said Hugh, "that Christ was sacrificed by God to appease His wrath with the world, neither do we believe that His death took away our sin and our responsibility. But we do believe that Jesus's whole life here on earth was passed in showing us how we could be at one with God and that through Him, if we do all our part, we have our share in the at-one-ment."

"Of course, to my mind, such teaching as that takes away all the crowning beauty of His life, the wonderful sacrifice 'for the sins of the whole world.'"

"I do not think that the sacrifice is any the less real to us than to you. Only we believe that it was made to teach us the unreality of

sin and death, and that it was a voluntary sacrifice, not made to propitiate God, but to show man the way to conquer the world and all its error, and to become at one with the only living God."

"To me by such teaching you lessen the power of the cross and deprive the sacrifice of half its meaning; and it is a result of that, I suppose, that makes you entirely ignore the sacraments of the church, which were ordained by Christ Himself."

"There again, I never could quite reconcile the church's teaching. Take baptism first: our Lord certainly allowed Himself to be baptized, but the custom was obviously in use before, as John was already baptizing before our Lord came to him. Then St. John especially tells us that the Master Himself did not baptize, so that it seems to me quite questionable whether in His command he meant the outward sign of water used by John, or only the other baptism spoken of by John the Baptist himself, when he says, 'But he that com-

eth after me . . . he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost.' It is in this latter sense that we understand its meaning in Christian Science.

"Now in regard to the other sacrament: Christian Science does not ignore the communion, for we also hold a communion service twice in every year, not in the same form as yours, but a service of silent communion with God. I can quite understand that to you who have your faith and have always believed in it, Christian Science would at first only seem a form of idealism, but I have shown you how impossible I have found it to believe in your church, and to me this faith has come as a God-send. From having no religion at all, I have now got a very beautiful one, as it seems to me, and added to that I am regaining my health; you cannot wonder that I am grateful to Christian Science."

"No, of course not," and Arthur's voice was intensely sad. "I can only very deeply regret that the church should have failed to do what

others have accomplished. I am glad at all events that you have found a God and a Christ even if I cannot approve the rest of the teaching. I think I am probably very much to blame for your former attitude of mind. I might have done much that I have left undone, if so, blame me and not the church."

"My dear old fellow, I am sure you are in no way to blame; I have always admired your pluck. It has been entirely my own affair and I think we all have to work out our own salvation our own way. You know our Lord said, 'Other sheep I have which are not of this fold,' they were none the less His sheep; now perhaps we belong to that other fold, my dear Arthur."

"God grant it may be so," was the fervent answer.

Harry held out his hand. "We shall be none the less friends for this difference of opinion?" he questioned.

"By no means; indeed I think now that we understand each other's views fully, that we

ought to be better friends, and possibly we may each be able to help the other."

"I have no doubt we may. I am sorry for all the trouble this has brought you, old man, but I fear it was inevitable."

Arthur sighed and turned to Hugh. "I trust that we, too, may be friends, Sir Hugh," he said, holding out his hand; "you have succeeded where I have failed, will you let that be a bond between us?"

"Assuredly," said Hugh, "and I am grateful to you for your patience and charity. If there was a little more of the latter in the world I think we should all be more united."

"Yes, there is need for more charity on all hands. And now if you will excuse me, I will go to bed; it has been a very trying and a very tiring day."

When Arthur had left the room there was silence for a long time, then Harry roused himself.

"He is a good fellow, and I am sorry he has taken it so hard. But I'm glad he stuck to

his guns, too; he was very fair, and has evidently studied the subject."

"Yes, he is the first parson I have met who has. He seems a good sort, but all the same I believe he thinks we are both damned, you know."

"I shouldn't wonder. Do you think the time will ever come when the whole world will have but one religion?"

"I suppose it will, but not for a good many ages yet, I fear."

"Well, it certainly won't in our day. And now I think, in deference to the powers that be, we had better each do the lesson to-morrow in the privacy of our own room; don't you think so?"

"Yes, I think it would be best. I will give you treatment before breakfast for an hour, so that you can work at the same time, and then we need not mind so much about the distraction after. But, look here, old fellow, don't you think, perhaps, it would be wiser for me to leave to-morrow? Your mother

really seems to think I am an unsafe sort of person, and you are so near the desired end now that my absence cannot affect you in the least; and, besides, you know enough now to work out your own recovery."

"No, no, I don't want you to leave, and, besides, I think it will be quite as well for the mater to see that you do not practise any of the black arts that she imagines. When she discovers what a very simple, quiet life we lead, she will soon get bored, and then she will depart again."

"Very well, I undertook to stay, and of course I will, and we must try to show Mrs. Leslie by our lives that we are not quite the devils she imagines us to be."

XVIII

THE following morning when Mrs. Leslie swept downstairs at nine o'clock in answer to the breakfast gong, astonishment nearly overcame her at sight of Harry already up and dressed and in his long chair; but she pretended not to notice. She treated Sir Hugh to a distant bow, and kissed all the rest of the party rather more effusively than usual to mark the contrast.

But in spite of Mrs. Leslie's rather cold and chilling manner, breakfast was a much greater success than dinner the night before had been. The three men were decidedly more at ease, and this fact quickly communicated itself to the girls, whose spirits at once revived. Arthur still looked extremely tired and pale, and both the other men wondered whether he had permitted himself to sleep.

After breakfast he strolled out on to the lawn, and joining Sybil asked her to go for a walk with him. They turned off down one of the long walks, and when they were well out of earshot of the open windows, Arthur spoke.

"I am very sorry, Sybil, to have to bring your visit here to a close, but I am afraid it is inevitable, and I must ask you to return to town with me this afternoon."

"To return with you this afternoon!" exclaimed Sybil in astonishment. "Why on earth?"

"Because I do not think it wise for you to remain here just at present; also, as Angela will be returning with Mrs. Leslie, you cannot, of course, remain."

"Oh! if Angela is going, of course that is another matter, but I think you are mistaken; Angela would have told me if she had any intention of leaving, I am sure; besides, I heard Mrs. Leslie say she was going to stay."

"In any case I am afraid I must ask you to accompany me. It is my wish that you should

leave and I promised mother that I would bring you back."

"And all this fuss, just because Sir Hugh has found a way to cure Harry. You don't take their Christian Science seriously?"

"I do take it very seriously, but I am thankful to hear that you have not, and I shall be still more thankful to have you safe away."

"What awful rubbish. Whatever harm do you think their Science is going to do me?"

"You have not studied this Christian Science as I have, and therefore you cannot realize the danger of its teaching, and I would prefer that you should not be exposed to it."

"Such nonsense, as if a man like Sir Hugh would ever do one any harm. You don't repose much confidence in my faith, either."

"You must remember you are very young and both Sir Hugh and Harry are clever men."

"Yes, I know that, but perhaps you will be surprised to hear that neither of them has ever, by one word, attempted to convert me to

their way of thinking, and consequently they have earned my respect."

"It is greatly to their credit, but that does not alter my wish that you should be safely out of their way, and I must ask you to come with me."

"You may ask, but what if I decline?"

"You will not do that," gently.

"Will not? I absolutely decline to come with you, so there!"

"Nonsense, Sybil, do not be childish. I do not want to have to exert my authority over you. Be reasonable, dear, and do as I wish."

"Reasonable! Do you call it reasonable to leave your oldest friends at a moment's notice because they don't happen to think as you do about some doctrine? I never heard anything so mean. I will not go."

"I'm afraid you must."

"Afraid I must? You won't drag me by force, I presume?"

"I cannot argue with you, Sybil," was the weary answer, "but I repeat that you must

come home with me this afternoon, so you had best make up your mind and come peacefully."

"I shall do no such thing, unless Angela is going, I shall stay. I don't care a pin for your authority," and with a toss of her head Sybil broke away from him and fled towards the house.

In the hall she came upon Harry, who had not moved. He looked up at the flushed angry face in some amusement.

"Why, what is the matter?" he asked sympathetically.

"Arthur has just ordered me to return with him this afternoon. Did you ever hear such nonsense?"

Harry gave a low whistle. "Did he really ask you to do that?"

"He not only asked, he said I must."

"I am sorry," said Harry gravely.

"Oh, you needn't be, because I am not going," rather defiantly.

"Not going?" in a tone of mild surprise.

"No."

"But you know he is your guardian. I am afraid you will have to."

"I won't," angrily; "unless, of course, you wish me to."

"Wish you to?" Harry looked at her reproachfully, and she felt a little ashamed of her remark.

"It's such rubbish," she said scornfully.

"No, I don't think it is rubbish, I think he is quite right."

"Quite right?"

"Yes, quite right. You must remember that Arthur looks upon Christian Science as a dangerous heresy, the belief in which is sin, which leads to everlasting damnation. Believing that, he is quite right to take you away."

"All the same, I am not going."

"Oh, yes, I think you are," looking steadily at her.

Sybil shook her head and pouted. "No, I am not."

Suddenly Harry sat up in his chair.

"Come here," he commanded, with that note of authority so seldom heard.

Sybil rather unwillingly crossed the room and sat down on the extreme end of his long chair. "Well?" she remarked, feeling a little nervous.

"I want to talk to you for a few minutes, you don't mind, do you?"

"No, of course not."

"You have enjoyed being down here, haven't you?"

"Yes, very much indeed."

"I am glad of that, and I don't want you to spoil your visit by having a row with Arthur. He is an awfully good fellow. We had a tremendous talk last night and he has studied the subject and honestly believes it to be wrong. You must remember that you are still under age and he considers himself your guardian, and that he is, therefore, quite right to take you away. He doesn't in the least mean to hurt us, he is only doing what he conceives to be his duty, and he is awfully cut up

about it, too. You must not make it worse for the poor old chap."

"I'm sure I don't want to have a row with him, but to me it seems such nonsense."

"You see you have avoided studying the subject, and I am glad you have just now, but old Arthur is bound to stick to his point, you must not oppose him."

"But am I not to be considered in the matter?" asked Sybil.

"It is entirely out of consideration for you that he insists, don't you see?"

"Is Angela going to leave?"

"No; at least I have not heard anything about it and, anyway, she will hardly go until the mater does, and she apparently means to stay."

Sybil gave a little laugh. "To look after Sir Hugh, I suppose?"

Harry nodded. "And you will do as Arthur wishes?" he asked. "If not on his account, will you do it to please me?" His voice was gentle and persuasive.

"Then you do want me to go?" Sybil rose from her seat with a flushed and angry face as she said this.

"I? Want you to go?"

Something in his voice arrested her attention, then as her eyes met his the anger all died out in them and the flush on her face deepened. Suddenly Harry held out both hands to her, and the girl almost unconsciously put hers into them, and he drew her down again on to his couch.

"Listen, little girl," he said, in his deep soft tones; "you have looked upon me always as your friend, I know. Some day, when I am my own man again, I shall ask you to look upon me in another light. I cannot ask you now, not until I am quite sound, and not until you are older, because if you dared return my love, Arthur and your mother would naturally oppose us, and you could not come to me until you were of age. Meantime, dearest, I want you to know that I love you with all my heart, and that I am always your friend, ready to

help you whenever you may want me. Quite soon now, please God, I shall be whole and free, then I shall come back to town and resume the old life of long ago; then I can see a great deal of you. Arthur promises to remain my friend, so the intercourse between us all is to go on the same as ever. You are not always very happy at home, I gather," and he pressed the hands that still lay passively in his. "Will you have me for your father confessor, and bring your troubles to me? You have always found me a sympathetic listener, haven't you?"

He paused, but Sybil did not answer; she was gazing at him with shining, rather frightened eyes.

"I haven't startled you, little girl?" he asked very softly.

Sybil shook her head. "It is so wonderful," she whispered. "I cannot believe it."

"Nevertheless, dearest, it is quite true, and I want you to believe it, and remember, will you?"

"Remember? Do you think I am likely to forget?"

For a moment they gazed into each other's eyes, then slowly Harry raised her hands to his lips and very gently kissed first one, then the other.

"So then we seal our compact, dearest, and you promise not to forget?"

"I promise," and with a quick movement she leant forward and kissed Harry on the forehead. For one moment his arms went round her, then he released her, and she rose hastily from the chair, a little breathless, but very happy.

"And to think that I must go to-day," she said regretfully; "but I don't think I mind so much now; the world has somehow all been changed."

Before Harry could reply they were interrupted by Angela, who came rather hurriedly down the stairs.

"Harry, mother wishes me to return to town this afternoon with Arthur and Sybil,"

she began at once, "tell me, what am I to do?"

"Why, my dear girl, do just whatever you feel is best; you are of an age when you have every right to please yourself."

"What do you wish me to do?"

"Oh, if you consult my wishes that is another matter; I want you to stay here, and, indeed, if you leave, I don't know what Hugh and I would do, we would have to go back too, I think."

"That decides me then, I shall stay."

"Is it Hugh the mater is afraid of?"

"Oh! I don't know, she is quite unreasonable about the whole subject."

"Well, at any rate, there can be no objection to your remaining as long as she is here herself; she will be able to look after you; she cannot object to that."

"Hardly, I should think, though in her present mood she seems to object to everything."

"Oh, we will get Arthur to speak to her; he was most reasonable last night when we talked it all over."

"I am glad of that. I suppose you must go, Sybil?"

"Yes, I am afraid there is no help for me," with a laughing glance at Harry, who gaily shook his head.

Angela sighed. "How wrong it all is," she said in her old weary tones that had not been heard for weeks; "and we were all so happy before."

"Cheer up, little woman," said Harry cheerfully; "we are all going to be happy again. Tell the mater you intend to stay, and if she bothers you any more refer her to me."

"All right," and Angela retraced her steps upstairs at a rather slower pace than that at which she had come down.

Mrs. Leslie was very much annoyed, indeed, when she heard her daughter's decision, but the girl did not stay to argue further; she told

her mother that it was Harry's wish and she had better speak to him, knowing full well that would settle the matter.

Feeling unusually ruffled and low spirited, Angela went back to the hall, but her brother and Sybil had gone, and she wandered rather aimlessly into the garden.

Meanwhile Arthur, left suddenly by his sister, had pursued his way down the long walk and then finding an inviting opening into a little grassy nook, he turned aside and lay down under the shade of a big tree.

He looked and felt tired out and ill. Angela's refusal to marry him earlier in the year had been a very great blow to Arthur, and it had gone very hard with him during the months that followed; now this other trouble coming so soon after, had almost entirely overwhelmed him. The last three nights he had hardly slept at all, and for weeks the unusual heat in London had been extremely trying to bear. A sense of failure was strong upon him, too; he felt worn out in body and mind. The

coolness and the shade were very pleasant, and closing his eyes he tried not to think and gave himself up to its enjoyment.

How long he had been there he did not know, when he was roused by the sound of approaching footsteps. He did not stir, but opened his eyes and listened, and then he was aware that it was Angela who had penetrated his retreat and was standing looking down at him.

"Don't get up," she said quickly, as he would have risen; "I can see you are tired out. It is ever so long before lunch-time; lie still and have a rest; this is a lovely cool place to take a siesta in."

She turned, as if to leave him undisturbed, but Arthur detained her.

"Don't go," he said quickly. "I have hardly spoken to you since I came."

"Don't you think it is perhaps best so?" asked the girl gently. "We are bound to have an argument if we begin, and you look much more fit to go to sleep."

"I cannot sleep and I must talk to you; please stay."

Angela sat down on the grass at some little distance from him.

"Poor old Arthur," she said softly. "Harry and I have caused you a great deal of misery, I am afraid. I am very sorry, but do you think you need be so very unhappy about us, are you quite sure that we are so entirely lost as you imagine?"

"Angela, have you quite made up your mind to become a Christian Scientist?"

"I have not yet made up my mind to join their church, because there is still a good deal of their teaching I cannot at present understand; also, though you may not believe it, there was a great deal in the old thought that I did believe in and was fond of. Harry had no real religion of any kind, he had no structure to pull down, only an empty space on which to build. I had a building, partly in ruins, it is true, but it had many walls and it has not been altogether easy pulling down and

reconstructing, although I find much of the old material is still able to be used."

"To carry on your simile, are you sure that you have built your house on the rock and not upon the sand?"

"Yes, I am sure of the foundation, but I am not yet sure if all the materials are sound; do you understand that?"

"Yes," sadly, "I think I do. I had a very long talk with Harry and Sir Hugh last night; we were all very patient and I think both sides learned something from the other, but we all ended just where we started."

"I cannot argue with you, Arthur, everything is still too new, besides I know the results of our arguments in the past; but believe me, I am not taking this up as a whim, it is a serious matter, and I am studying it earnestly. I shall not join them unless I am quite convinced that they are right."

"I know that, dear, and that is what troubles me; if it were a passing whim, why should I worry?"

"Do you not think that perhaps all this worry is a wee bit unchristian? Our Lord told us to 'take no thought for the morrow,' and also to 'judge not.' Do you not think that we are perhaps not trusting God as we ought when we allow ourselves to worry so much? Are we not all in His hands, and if we have each done our own part, do you not think we might safely leave the rest to Him?"

"Perhaps you are right, and if I could only feel that I had done my part I might think differently about this, but I don't believe you realize all this means to me; you, of all people, Angela. You were far enough away before, but now the whole world seems between us, and I can not help feeling as I do."

"Ah, believe me, dear Arthur, we are not so far from each other as you think. I know this is a grief to you, I can understand that, but, forgive me for saying it, can you not put a little more trust in God? We can none of us work out salvation for the other; each must do his own work, and if we each of us do the

best we know how in this world, don't you think we may safely leave the rest to God?"

"Oh, yes, but we can help each other so much."

"Yes, but do not forget that we can also hinder each other. God may not intend us all to find salvation the same way. Don't you think that perhaps there may be several roads that eventually lead to the same goal?"

"I wish I could think so, Angela, but the church was the road ordained by Christ and I dare not acknowledge any other way."

"And yet He reproached the disciples because they wished to suppress one whom they saw working miracles in Christ's name without following Him. He did not condemn him; you remember, He said, 'He that is not against us is on our part!'"

"That is true. We are all too prone to judge one another, and there is a great lack of charity in the world."

"Let us then show our charity by allowing each other to hold our own views. Try not to

think too hardly—no you would not do that —too sadly of me then, and leave just a little more to God, dear Arthur. We are both on the same side, after all."

Arthur bowed his head. "Very well."

"And now I am going to leave you to have a rest," and she rose slowly to her feet; "or will you come indoors? You look worn out and you have to go back to town this afternoon, to all the heat and smoke. I don't suppose you have allowed yourself a wink of sleep for at least three nights; that kind of thing is not going to help you do your work, you know. Trust God and—go to sleep."

She stood smiling down on him for a moment with extreme tenderness, then she slowly turned away and left him.

Ten minutes later, when she cautiously peeped round the bushes, he was fast asleep.

XIX

In the afternoon Arthur and his sister left, and Harry insisted that he and Angela should drive in with them and see them off.

In the early days of Harry's stay at Hollydene, before the advent of the crutches, he had found driving a great change and amusement. Sir Hugh had suggested that a comfortable carriage would be a wise addition to the establishment, and accordingly it had been purchased. But after the crutches came into use, the carriage was discarded, anything that approached walking was much more attractive, and Sir Hugh was anxious to encourage any attempt in that direction.

So now the four of them drove off together. Sir Hugh had said good-bye earlier in the afternoon, and had announced his intention of going for a walk, so Mrs. Leslie was left in

peace to think matters over. She had held a conversation with Arthur after lunch in which he had advised her to let Angela remain, at any rate while she herself was there, and, above all things, to try to be patient.

The drive to the station was cheerful, though rather quiet. Arthur felt better for his rest, and was anxious to leave a more cheerful impression behind him; and Angela made an effort to help him and to keep his spirits up. The other two were extraordinarily gay, and seemed to have quite forgotten that there was any trouble in the air.

At the station Harry, of course, remained in the carriage, and Angela strolled on to the platform with Arthur to see them off.

"Now, you must cheer up," she said gently, "and trust. You won't help any of us if you allow yourself to get ill, you know."

Arthur smiled. "Oh, I am never ill, and I accept your rebuke, and will try to trust more. You will forgive me if I have said anything to hurt you?"

"You have said nothing to hurt me." (She refrained from saying how much his action in taking Sybil away hurt her.) "And you will not put me beyond the pale of friendship on account of my views?"

"Of course not. How could you think such a thing?"

"It was wrong of me, I should have known you better. One thing more before you go, I want to know," colouring hotly, "would you care to have my picture in remembrance of all our conversations?"

"Your picture? Care to? How can you ask? But you would not give it to me?"

"Yes, I would like to give it you. There are too many thoughts painted into it for me to want to sell it, and it is too good a portrait of Harry to go beyond our immediate circle. It was you who originally inspired me to paint it, and I know you would value it. May I give it you? It is the best thing I have ever done."

"May you give it me? How can you ask,

Angela? There is nothing I should prize so much in all the world, it is like having a little bit of yourself offered to me. I can never thank you enough."

"I don't want any thanks, I know you will value it, and that is why I want you to have it. I will send it to you when we go back to town. Now here comes your train, we must fetch Sybil."

The latter had, of course, lingered by the carriage as the two others strolled off.

"Now, remember, I am to be Father-Confessor," said Harry gaily, "and that of course means that you will write to me at least once a week until I return to town."

"Very well; and when do you imagine that will be?"

"In another month at the latest, perhaps before. Sybil, you do believe that some day I shall be quite well, don't you?"

The girl looked away for a moment. In her heart of hearts she did not think he would, and she had already dreamed of being his

nurse, as well as his comrade, to the end of their days. But she knew that Harry's hopes of winning her depended in his own mind on his complete recovery; without that he would never ask her to be his wife. If she told him what she really thought, he would at once conclude that that was the reason she had accepted him, for it amounted to that. She loved him, and could not let him think that. With scarcely a moment's hesitation she turned to him again.

"Why, yes, of course you will," she told him steadily; "but don't be long about it, I shall want you back in town very soon."

"When you need me I shall be there, don't ever forget that."

"No fear, and if I am very wretched I shall just write and order you home."

"Right you are, I'll come."

"What, cure or no cure?"

"You won't want me till I am cured, I feel certain," he answered.

Suddenly Sybil realized for the first time

that he was somehow thinking Christian Science.

"Harry, you don't mind my not being a Christian Scientist, do you?" she asked anxiously.

"No, dearest, why should I mind?"

"You are not afraid that our thoughts may clash, that we shall not think of things in the same way?"

"Why, no, you are a Christian, so am I; that is all that matters as far as I am concerned."

"That is all right, and now here comes the train, good-bye." Suddenly the tears came to her eyes, but she blinked them away.

"Good-bye, little girl, don't forget." He held her hands closely in his for a moment, then Arthur and Angela came up, and the usual bustle of departure was gone through, till at last the train steamed out of the station bearing them away.

On the drive home Harry confided to Angela his hopes about Sybil, and for the first time let himself go, so that Angela was treated

to a lover's rhapsody that lasted the whole way.

When they arrived back at the house it was past tea-time, and Andrews informed them, with a grin that he tried very hard to suppress, that he had already served tea upon the lawn, so thither they at once proceeded, to find Mrs. Leslie and Sir Hugh partaking of tea together, apparently the best of friends.

"By Jove! the mater has succumbed," muttered Harry.

But this was by no means the case. Mrs. Leslie was simply bored. At no time fond of her own society or the country, she had, after an hour's seclusion in the cool of the drawing-room, wandered forth in search of more genial companionship, and espying Sir Hugh seated on the lawn, she had set about for a way of making friends. She had no mind to apologize for her former rudeness, which made the situation a little awkward, but she had a notion that Sir Hugh was not quite like the other men of her acquaintance, and, with

that idea well rooted in her mind, she decided that she would ignore the whole matter, and would treat him as if nothing out of the way had occurred.

Accordingly she went forward graciously across the lawn, and when Sir Hugh rose from his chair, she bade him be seated again as charmingly as though he were her dearest friend.

Hugh was at first very much surprised, but he soon realized what was the reason for this sudden change of front, and welcomed it, for the situation was unpleasant enough for him before, and he was glad of the change. He had not the slightest feeling of resentment towards Mrs. Leslie for all she had said to him; the circumstances were peculiar, and he readily forgave her and ignored what was passed; so that by the time Harry and Angela returned, they were to all appearances the best of friends, and the result was a very charming tea-party.

But when Harry chaffed her afterwards for

having succumbed, he quickly found out his mistake.

The week that followed to all outward seeming passed away much as the others had done, but beneath the surface things were far from smooth.

After Arthur and Sybil had left, the morning lesson and instruction were resumed, and Mrs. Leslie sat in the room and listened. She very rarely interrupted, but she did so occasionally when something struck her as more than usually outrageous; and afterwards, she would get hold of Angela and vent her pent-up feelings on her, a proceeding which the girl found exceedingly unpleasant.

At first Mrs. Leslie had a daily argument with Harry, whom she rarely let out of her sight unless she knew that Sir Hugh was safe out of the way; but she soon found it was useless; either he would floor her utterly with his arguments, and reduce her to tears, or else he would laugh good humouredly and refuse to be serious, so after a little she gave it up.

With Sir Hugh, of course, the subject was tabooed, but in spite of her outward friendliness, he knew quite well that she watched him always with suspicious eyes, waiting for an opportunity to catch him at what she had termed his devilish tricks.

At the end of a week she was obliged to own to herself that she had seen nothing whatever to find fault with in Sir Hugh's conduct, while there was not the slightest doubt that Harry was getting better every day. She had reduced Angela to silence, and was unutterably bored by the country. There were two or three visits she had promised to pay which she had no wish to give up; it was quite obvious that her presence had not the slightest effect on the two men, and there was not much object in remaining merely to annoy and worry Angela. All things considered, she thought she had better leave.

Accordingly, at dinner one night, she announced her intention of departing in a couple of days' time.

The news was certainly a surprise to the party, but no one showed it, neither did they make any hypocritical suggestions that she should stay. Harry remarked pleasantly that he supposed she had some other visits to pay, and after discussing the time of trains and the other necessary arrangements, the conversation passed on to other things.

But when later the two ladies retired to the drawing-room, Mrs. Leslie made one more effort to get Angela to leave with her.

"Of course you will come with me on Thursday," she remarked, picking up a paper casually, as if the point were already settled.

"I am sorry," answered the girl, "but I am afraid I cannot."

"Cannot? Why not, pray?" with affected astonishment.

"You know quite well why not, mother. We have discussed this matter before; the situation is the same now as it was then."

"By no means. I consented to let you remain until I left myself, no longer."

"I am sorry if you misunderstood me, but I cannot leave here until Harry does."

"You mean to disregard my wishes entirely, then?"

"I have no desire to disregard your wishes, but I promised Harry to remain here as long as he wanted me, and he wishes me to stay on until he leaves himself."

"Does he? I should like to know what for, pray?"

"Partly because he likes my companionship, and partly because he requires someone to do his housekeeping, and look after things here."

"What nonsense, Mrs. Robinson is quite capable of looking after the house."

"Whether she is or is not I do not know, at any rate I intend to remain here as long as Harry does."

"It seems to me that the whole pack of you have gone mad. If anybody had told me that you and Harry would defy and deceive me as you have done, I would never have believed

them. It is not a good advertisement for your new religion, I assure you."

"If it comes to that, I do not know that the old religion has been advertised any better just lately."

"You need not be impertinent; and I warn you that if you persist in backing up Harry in this nonsense, I shall no longer consider you any daughter of mine."

"I shall certainly stick to Harry, whatever happens, and I do not think that he will ever let me regret it."

"I think you will both of you regret your behaviour one of these days."

"We can safely leave that to the future."

The entrance of Andrews with the coffee prevented further conversation, and Angela was glad of the interruption.

Two days later Mrs. Leslie left, by herself, and the men drove in to see her off, for she would hardly say good-bye to Angela.

To the girl the past week had been almost unbearable. The unexpected invasion of their

peace had made her aware of thoughts and feelings that until then had lain secret. She had suddenly realized that Sir Hugh had opened her eyes to something else besides Christian Science. Then had followed a great struggle. She had begun to suspect herself of having accepted the teaching because she was in love with the teacher, and all the old arguments were gone through again, with Arthur and her mother to reinforce them. Those daily discussions with Mrs. Leslie had become a torture to her, and the fact of her mother leaving her in anger was swallowed up by relief at her departure.

After they had driven off, the girl turned back into the house to attend to various matters; and about an hour later emerged again armed with a book. She took her favourite seat on the lawn and opened the volume, but she could not read; the ever-recurring arguments kept running in her head.

Presently she got up and began to stroll about, until at last she found herself in the

shady nook where she had surprised Arthur some days ago. Hot, tired and miserable, she lay down on the grass and did a thing that with Angela was a very rare occurrence; she gave way to a flood of tears.

And so it came about, that when the two men returned from their drive rather after tea-time, no hostess was to be found. Andrews declared that Miss Leslie was somewhere in the garden, so Sir Hugh volunteered to go and look for her.

After wandering round one or two of her favourite haunts, he at last took his way to the little shady nook at the end of the long walk, and as he drew near his steps were arrested by the sound of someone sobbing. For a moment he hesitated, and half turned away, then, like a flash, it came to him that he would give all he possessed to be able to comfort the sobbing girl. He paused again, and in a second his mind was made up. The next instant he was standing beside her murmuring passionate words of sympathy and love.

To Angela, tired and miserable, he came as the embodiment of strength and happiness. She found herself powerless to resist him, all her scruples vanished, and with the realization of this great mystery of love, there came to her also a realization of the fact that God is Love, and over them both there stole that peace "which passeth all understanding."

XX

IT was early September, and the trio were still at Hollydene. Sybil had been taken by her mother to pay some visits in Scotland, so the desire to return to town, as far as Harry was concerned, had completely vanished, while the lovers were only too glad of the excuse to keep their secret and enjoy the unusually fine summer in the haunts of the lovely old garden.

Now the weather had turned colder, and tea was being served in the hall, no longer on the lawn. The shooting party had not come off after all, for Harry had suddenly decided to let the shooting to a friend who had rented it for several years, and young Bernard Leslie had been asked down to take a gun for a few days.

Communication between Hollydene and the

outside world had been very slight indeed. Occasional letters had passed between Angela and her sister, but neither Christian Science nor Harry had been mentioned in them. Mrs. Leslie had preserved a complete silence. Arthur had once or twice written, and Sybil and Harry exchanged regular weekly missives. It was understood that Mrs. Leslie and Gertrude would remain out of town until October, and, after their return, the party at Hollydene would break up, but how things were progressing was unknown on either side.

Angela, on this particular afternoon, had driven the dogcart to the station to meet her young brother, whom she had not seen since she left town in May; and of whose doings she had heard little. He had been abroad with some friends at the time Mrs. Leslie had invaded Hollydene, so had heard very little about anything in connection with the family troubles, beyond bare facts.

On the drive back to the house he chatted eagerly, about his trip abroad and all he had

seen and done, after first having inquired how 'old Harry' was getting on, and whether 'that chap Rivers' was still there.

Angela encouraged him to talk of his own doings so that she might enjoy to the full his surprise when he saw Harry once more. When they drew up at the open door Sir Hugh was standing watching for them.

"Has your sister told you our good news?" he asked, as he helped Angela down from the high cart.

"I'm afraid I haven't given her much chance," said the boy, laughing, "I've been talking all the time."

"Then allow me to present you to my future wife," said Hugh, with glowing eyes as he drew Angela forward.

"Not really? By Jove, Angela, why didn't you tell me? That is splendid. I congratulate you," holding out his hand to Hugh, who gripped it cordially. Then he turned and kissed his sister, who was blushing most charmingly. "I'm jolly glad, old girl," he

whispered, "I was afraid it would be Arthur."

Just then there was a bustle in the hall behind them, and Bernard was suddenly clapped on the back, while a cheery voice exclaimed:

"So here you are, young man, with guns and all the rest of it, and looking A1; it is quite like old times to see you down here again, eh?"

Bernard turned and stared in blank amazement. There stood Harry, absolutely well and fit, as he had been in the old days. He could not believe his eyes.

The other three laughed with sheer happiness and delight, and Harry put his arm affectionately round the boy's shoulders and drew him into the house. Not till they were inside did he find his voice.

"I am not dreaming, am I?" he asked, rubbing his eyes. "It really is you?"

"Yes, it is really me," laughed Harry.

"It is simply ripping then. What rot the mater talked."

"Why, what did she say?"

"A lot of bunkum about Sir Hugh and the devil, and that you were not really one bit better."

"No! Did she say that?"

"Oh, yes, she said you were deluded," laughing.

"Well, I have been deluded to some purpose, haven't I?"

"Rather, it is splendid; and Sir Hugh has done it?"

"Yes, through Hugh's means it has been accomplished."

"Then three cheers for Sir Hugh! It is good to see you like that, old man," laying his hands on his brother's shoulders. "It was beastly to see you always on your back, and I used to feel a brute for being so strong and well; the world will be a different place with you about once more."

"It is good to hear you say so, my dear boy, and I guess that now we'll make up for lost time, eh?"

"Rather. Are you going to shoot to-morrow?" excitedly.

"No."

"But you could. Why not?"

"Well, in the first place I have not been asked, you see, and secondly, I don't think I want to."

"Not want to? You used to be so keen."

"Yes; but this has rather altered my views of things in general."

"I see." The boy looked rather curious. "You mean this Christian Science?"

"Yes, but don't be afraid, I am not going to become a second Arthur."

Bernard laughed. "Fancy you like Arthur!" he exclaimed merrily. "The poor chap looks awfully ill now, though; he seemed fearfully cut up about you and Angela, and from the way they all talked, I thought Sir Hugh was killing you by inches."

"You thought I was doing what?" asked Sir Hugh, just then coming in with Angela.

"He thought from the mater's account that

I was being done to death by slow degrees at your hands," laughed Harry. "Come, Angela, return to earth, my dear, and let us have tea."

"I should have thought," remarked Bernard with a puzzled expression, "that the mater would be so jolly glad to see you quite well, that she would not mind how it was done."

"Yes, I thought so, too," said Harry, "but I found out my mistake. However, she has not yet seen me quite well; that is a surprise still in store for her; when she was here I was only limping round on crutches."

"I think she thought at first that I was a near relation of the devil," laughed Hugh, "but she quite made friends with me before she left."

"Outwardly," returned Harry, "but I think inwardly she still has qualms."

"Goodness! I should have thought she would have overwhelmed you with thanks," said Bernard.

"Ah! he does not want any thanks from us," said Harry, with a glance at Angela.

"I want no thanks from anyone," said Hugh gravely, "but anything that I have been the means of doing to help here is repaid a thousand times over by what I have gained, that I can never hope to deserve though I shall devote my life to the attempt."

"I say, does the mater know?" inquired Bernard of his sister.

"No, not yet; that is the next treat in store for her, and we hope that, combined with Harry's complete recovery, she may give in. I am afraid we cannot help it if she won't. I have Harry's consent, you see, and he is the head of the family."

"Oh! the mater will cave in all right, I expect," said Bernard, "she won't be able to help it."

"I don't think we will tell them when we are going home," said Harry; "we will surprise them as they did us; perhaps if we storm the fortress we shall carry it."

So three weeks later they carried out this plan. Harry wrote and said they would be home any time after the first, and on that day they began their preparations for departure, and a few days later the pretty old house where they had all been so happy, was closed again and left to caretakers.

When the day at last came they were all very sorry to go. It had been a wonderful summer for them all, a golden time that would never come again. A time they would look back upon as one of the happiest in their lives; so it was rather a silent trio that eventually drove away, casting lingering glances back at the picturesque old place that had been the setting for so many scenes during the past four months.

XXI

IN the afternoon that Harry had selected for their return, it happened that Mrs. Leslie had a tea-party. Mrs. Dalrymple and Arthur were among the guests, but Sybil had pleaded a headache and stayed at home; she wished to meet this new lover of hers, who was well and strong, away from the watchful eyes of her mother and Mrs. Leslie.

Tea was over and the conversation had turned on Christian Science. Someone had inquired of Mrs. Leslie how her son was getting on.

"Oh! my dear, he is not getting on at all," was the reply. "You know he has taken up with this horrid craze for Christian Science."

"You don't say so, how dreadful!"

"Oh! but I hear they do the most wonderful things," said someone else.

"What do you think about it, Mr. Dalrymple?" asked another.

"A very dangerous heresy," said Arthur, rather shortly. He had a strange aversion to discussing the subject.

"But I believe they do cure people in a most wonderful manner," another remarked.

"Oh! yes," put in Gertrude, "in cases of entirely nervous complaints and that sort of thing, of course they do a great deal. I think everyone realizes the value of mental treatment in these days."

"Oh, yes, no one complains of their treatment for nervous diseases," said Mrs. Leslie; "but there is nothing nervous about Harry, he was always a very healthy, strong-minded person before his accident."

"I often wonder if the fall in any way injured the brain," said Mrs. Dalrymple.

"I never thought so before," said Mrs. Leslie, "but when you find him deluding himself as he is doing now one begins to wonder all sorts of things."

"And what about Angela," asked one of the party, "she is with him, is she not?"

"Oh, yes, Angela is aiding and abetting him all she can, but Angela always was odd."

"Of course she is an artist, and they are highly strung and nervous, don't you think so?" said the first speaker.

"Angela was always peculiar," said Gertrude, "and her devotion to Harry is quite unusual."

"Ah! I see, no doubt she is just doing it because he wishes her to. I expect she will get over it."

"Has Mr. Leslie got a healer?" asked someone else.

"Oh, yes, Sir Hugh Rivers is staying there."

"Sir Hugh Rivers!" said a chorus of voices, "you don't say so!"

"Yes, Sir Hugh Rivers," repeated Mrs. Leslie, rather enjoying the sensation. "Of course when Harry told me that he had invited Sir Hugh to stay, I made no objection;

my only knowledge of him was that he was an exceedingly clever young doctor, and I thought he would look after my son and perhaps do some little good. When he came to superintend Harry's departure he behaved as any careful doctor would, and I had not the slightest suspicion of anything else."

A murmur of sympathy went round the company, and Arthur turned away into one of the windows as Mrs. Leslie continued:

"It was some time after they had gone to Hollydene that Mr. Dalrymple discovered quite accidentally that Sir Hugh was a Christian Scientist."

"Good gracious! what a shock for you," said someone.

"It was a dreadful shock. Of course I went off at once to see what was going on, and to stop it without delay, but they were all three quite unreasonable and persisted in going on with it, in spite of all we could say."

"Dear me! how very distressing, and your son was, I suppose, worse?"

"No, I cannot say he was worse, but, of course, he was no better, really."

"And this Sir Hugh, what did he do to him?"

"Oh! he was much too clever to let me find out that, but while I was there he played none of his tricks, I took good care of that."

"I always thought Sir Hugh such a very charming man," someone observed.

"So did I," chimed in another.

"And he is," said Mrs. Leslie, "apart from this horrible Science. He is an extremely well-read, cultivated man, and very clever."

"But it is very sad for Mr. Leslie," said one of the first speakers, "because, I suppose, he believes he will recover?"

"Oh, yes. At least, so he says, but I cannot believe that he really thinks so; in his heart he must know that the doctors' verdict was irrevocable."

"Of course he does," said Gertrude briskly, "he is only doing this to pass the time, I believe. I suppose to a man who cannot take

It was as if one had risen from the dead and appeared among them.

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an active part in life, the study of all these things forms a distraction."

"Yes, poor fellow, it must have been very sad for him to be cut off from everything suddenly like that; it is a terrible thing for a young man."

"Terrible!" said Mrs. Dalrymple, "when I think of Harry as I used to know him, always full of life and energy, my heart aches for him."

Mrs. Leslie sighed deeply. "And it seems to me to be added cruelty to raise such hopes in him when they know all the time they can never——"

But the sentence was left unfinished, for at that moment the door opened and into the midst of the little party walked Harry Leslie and his sister.

To say that they were astonished, does not in the least convey the sensations of those present. It was as if one had risen from the dead and appeared among them. Mrs. Leslie and Gertrude gasped, and for a moment

thought they had seen a ghost, while Mrs. Dalrymple actually gave a shriek. Arthur, who had turned from the window when the door opened, gazed in absolute amazement, but he was the first to recover himself.

Harry had stopped opposite his mother with smiling face and outstretched hands, saying in his deep musical voice, "Are you not pleased to see me home again, mother?" And when Mrs. Leslie still stood white and speechless, it was Arthur who held out hands of welcome.

"Why, this is splendid, Harry, you are really quite well again? Accept my heartiest congratulations, and I am sure I shall be voicing the thoughts of all present when I say we are all delighted to see you restored to health once more."

"Why, yes, of—of course," murmured Mrs. Leslie, as she allowed Harry to embrace her.

Then Gertrude came slowly forward and kissed her brother with the bewildered air of a person only half awake, and Harry, having saluted the family, turned with cheery greet-

ings to those of the party with whom he was acquainted.

In the babel that followed Angela was unnoticed by all save Arthur and she drew aside with him into one of the windows.

"Arthur," she began at once, when she had assured herself that they would not be overheard, "I want to tell you something which I am afraid may hurt you. I seem destined to cause you pain, but I should like you to know before anyone else—I am going to marry Sir Hugh Rivers."

For a moment Arthur did not speak, and the girl was conscious of the struggle that was going on beside her, then he held out his hand.

"I hope you will be very happy," he said gently.

"Thank you, Arthur," returned Angela, with tears in her eyes, "you are good and generous. What do you think mother will say?"

"I am afraid Mrs. Leslie may not like the idea at first," he answered; "but I do not think she is likely to hold out long. Harry's

return in perfect health is bound to make her grateful to Sir Hugh. It is a very wonderful recovery," he added thoughtfully, his eyes straying to the tall figure who was the centre of a group of curious visitors.

Angela turned her eyes in the same direction; already Mrs. Leslie was purring over her son and unable to conceal her delight at his return.

Harry, who had noted the effect caused by his sudden entrance, had a very fair idea of what their conversation had been about when he appeared, and was quite delighted at having caused such a sensation. He answered all their questions with good-humoured amusement, and quite openly declared himself a Christian Scientist.

Most of the people were rather horrified, some were merely amused, while everyone was interested, and one or two made up their minds there and then to find out more about Christian Science.

It was all very well for Arthur to argue that

the cures proved nothing; perhaps for the moment he had forgotten the answer that our Lord sent back to St. John when his disciples came to Jesus to ask if He was the Messiah. He did not answer "Yes," but He told the disciples to go back and tell John of the wonderful cures that He had done, those were the proofs of His identity. He placed them first before the preaching of the gospel, and it was the fame of His miracles that brought the people together to hear Him so gladly.

Physical well-being is one thing in the world that everyone, be he rich or poor, desires, and a religion that makes the power of healing, unaided by any but spiritual means, a chief part of its teaching, is bound to be enormously attractive, and when behind it is found a deep sense of the truth and reality of the whole teaching of the New Testament, with that wonderful sense of fearlessness which alone comes from complete trust, there is little wonder that it should draw many into its fold.

When the guests had all gone, Angela informed her mother and sister that she was engaged to be married to Sir Hugh Rivers, and produced another sensation. Mrs. Leslie was first of all very angry, but when Harry judiciously remarked on the title, money, etc., of which Hugh was possessed, she calmed down a little, and Harry knew that eventually she would give in whatever she might say now.

Gertrude said very little at the time, but afterwards, when she was alone with Angela, she told the girl very plainly what she thought about it all. To her the whole matter was incomprehensible. What they wanted with Christian Science at all she could not understand; by all means have the healing, but leave Mrs. Eddy alone; and when Angela said she did not think it was fair to accept the results while refusing the teaching, Gertrude told her she was talking nonsense. Of course she could not approve of her marrying a heretic, and could not conceive how she could want to, charming though he might be; and though of

course she wished them every happiness, she saw very little chance of their obtaining it.

However, in quite a short time both Mrs. Leslie and Gertrude gave in. Hugh was very tactful and very courteous, and from a worldly point of view, it was an excellent match. Congratulations poured in on all sides. Mrs. Rivers and her daughters knew everyone and went everywhere; no one seemed in the least to mind their being Christian Scientists, so why, thought Mrs. Leslie, should she mind having one for a son-in-law? She would not have to live with him, and if Angela liked it, after all what did it matter? Harry was now quite well, and apparently in no way under the influence of Sir Hugh; there was no need to get mixed up with other Scientists, and after all they need see very little of the Riverses unless they liked. So she put the religious side of the matter entirely out of her thoughts, and turned her attention exclusively to the questions of wedding and trousseau.

XXII

THOUGH Angela's love affairs had prospered much better than she had expected, the same could not be said of her brother's.

The day after his return to town, Harry had gone off to call at the Dalrymples, having previously apprised Sybil of his coming. When he arrived he found her alone, as he had anticipated, and with a mixture of laughter and gravity, he made her his formal proposal, and when Mrs. Dalrymple came in later and interrupted them, he at once proffered his request for her hand.

Mrs. Dalrymple was taken completely by surprise, she had not had the slightest idea that the two had ever thought of each other in such a light, and for the moment she did not know what to answer. She had known Harry all his life and his father before him, and had

always been very much attached to him, and at one time, long before his accident, she had been in the habit of thinking of him as a very good match, and had regretted that he was so much older than Sybil. Then came the accident and all such ideas were completely knocked on the head. Now, suddenly, he appeared upon the scene perfectly well again, and a suitor for her daughter's hand, but, added to this, he was a heretic and her son was a clergyman of the church of England.

She was in an extremely awkward position. Against Harry, personally, she knew nothing; he had always been, as far as she knew, an honest, upright man, no one had ever breathed a word against him. He was the kind of man, too, who would make a girl like Sybil happy; and his age would be an advantage rather than otherwise, a protection to her youth and naturally high spirits, while he was sufficiently lively and amusing to make her an excellent companion.

At home Sybil was always considered

rather headstrong and self-willed, without any particular depth of feeling, and Mrs. Dalrymple knew from experience, that patience and tact were necessary qualities in dealing with the girl. Harry, she knew, was an unusually patient man, he had been taught his lesson by bitter necessity, a lesson he was never likely to forget, and with it he had acquired a gentleness and sympathy that made him a very lovable character.

She knew quite well, that, if it had not been for this Christian Science, she would have given her consent without hesitation, although she knew that, before he had taken this up, he had said he was without any religion at all. That would have weighed little with her, she would have trusted to Sybil and Arthur to build up his religion for him; but now that he had built one up for himself the case was altered. In the depths of her heart she knew that, personally, she did not really object, and that her love for Harry and her desire to have him as a husband for Sybil far outweighed

her reasons on the other side. But she was afraid of Arthur, and there was no doubt in her mind as to what he would say. So, very reluctantly, it must be owned, she refused her consent.

"I am very sorry, Harry, to have to say no," were the words she used, "but this craze for Christian Science that you have taken up is too serious a matter to pass over lightly, and I cannot give my consent to Sybil marrying one who is not a member of our church of England."

"You have no objection to me personally?" asked Harry, "it is only Christian Science?"

"Of course, I have no objection to you yourself, my dear boy; why, I have always been extremely fond of you all, and under other circumstances nothing would please me better, but as it is, I am afraid it is impossible."

"But you would not have me turn my back on Christian Science after all it has done for me, would you?"

"I can see no necessity for your believing

all the teaching, because they have cured you."

"But you see, their teaching is the means by which the cures are performed, I cannot help but believe in it."

"Well, I do not wish to argue the matter with you, we have all done that for some time past, but I cannot, under the circumstances, agree to your marriage with Sybil. In any case, I refer you to Arthur, he is her guardian and is the real authority in the matter."

"And if Arthur gives his consent, you will not withhold yours?"

"Certainly not. I shall rely entirely on Arthur's judgment. There he is, just come in now; you had better go down and talk to him while Sybil stays with me; you can come back and say good-bye to her afterwards."

Harry followed this advice and met Arthur in the hall. The latter gave him a wondering, startled look.

"I am not used yet to seeing you flying downstairs in that headlong fashion," he said

with a laugh, "it will take a little time to get accustomed to you. Come into my study, it is many years since you paid a call on me."

Harry followed him into the room and accepted a cigarette from the case Arthur held out to him, but he did not sit down.

"Arthur, old man," he began, "I came here this afternoon first to see Sybil and then you. Sybil has done me the honour to say she will be my wife. I have loved her for years, but never before had the hope that I should ever be free to win her. Now I have got a new lease of life and I have been able to let my dreams take shape, and find that they are no longer dreams, but realities. Sybil loves me, too, and is willing to marry me; will you give her to me?"

It seemed to Arthur that that moment was the crowning point of the misery he had suffered during all the past months. Here was his oldest friend asking his consent to marry his sister, and his conscience told him he must refuse. It was all so unexpected, too. He

had never dreamed of such an ending, and was quite unprepared. If Harry had brought him pain and trouble, he was now forced to bring the same on Harry, and not only on Harry, but Sybil, too, the young sister of whom he was very fond in his own way. It was a desperately hard thing to do, but it must be done.

When Harry had begun speaking Arthur had dropped into a chair close at hand, and as he went on he covered his face with his hand to hide his emotion. Harry finished, but Arthur did not look up for some moments, and when at last he did, his face was pale.

"Harry," he said, in a voice that was not quite steady, "I wish you had not asked me this. As your oldest friend, I would have given much to let you have the answer you want, but as a priest, I cannot. You know my views about this heresy that you have seen fit to adopt, we need not discuss that again; holding the views I do, then, I can only answer, that it is impossible."

"I am not altogether surprised, of course,"

said Harry, "I had expected there would be objections. You have nothing against me but Christian Science, I suppose?"

Arthur shook his head, "Of course not."

"Have you considered what you are doing when you refuse your consent? Supposing—I only say supposing, remember—that we abide by your decision, do you really think you have the right to deprive Sybil and myself of our happiness in life?"

"It could not be for Sybil's ultimate happiness," was the reply.

"Are you so sure of that? Do you not consider that it is a point for Sybil herself to decide?"

"Sybil is under age, and while I am her guardian, I must decide such a question for her."

"And you will take the responsibility of ruining her happiness?" asked Harry.

Arthur turned a shade paler, but he answered firmly. "Her happiness will not be ruined. It will cause her much unhappiness

for a time, I have no doubt, but when she understands that it was the right course to pursue, the strength gained from the sacrifice will enable her to continue her life as a blessing to herself and others."

"My poor little girl," murmured Harry under his breath. Then he went on. "But why should a sacrifice be needful? Surely love is a blessing direct from God, who is Love; you believe that, don't you?"

"Yes, I believe that, but I also believe that it may be sent as a lesson to teach us self-sacrifice. If we truly love we desire the loved one's happiness before our own."

"Of course we do, and it is because I am so sure that Sybil's happiness is bound up in mine, that I want to marry her."

"And I am equally sure that a union with one of another faith can never be happy or perfect, and I cannot consent to it. Don't urge me any more, Harry. Nothing you can say will alter my decision, and it is useless to discuss it further. Believe me, I am very

sorry that it should have to be so, and it grieves me more than I can tell you to act as I am doing, but I cannot help it, I must do my duty."

"And that is your final word?" asked Harry.

"Yes," bowing his head.

"Very well. Now listen to me. In a little over a year Sybil will be of age and your authority over her ceases. If she is still of the same mind as she is to-day, I shall marry her then. I want you to undertand that quite clearly. Meantime I consider myself engaged to her, and have not the slightest intention of giving her up, whatever you may say, so you had better make your terms now with regard to the intercourse between us in future."

"Of course I cannot prevent you considering yourself engaged, but I must forbid you to announce any such engagement, and in the meantime the less you see of each other, the better for you both. I am not cruel or inhuman, I do not want to do anything beyond my

duty, God knows; but Sybil is in my care and I shall have to answer for her, I dare not run such a risk for her. I would suggest that you promise not to communicate with her in any way, and that apart from the ordinary meetings in society which are unavoidable, you will make no attempt to see her alone at any time. Will you agree to this?"

"I suppose I cannot help myself, but you will let me speak to Sybil now?"

"Of course, I will send for her and tell her my decision, and then leave you to speak to her."

He rang the bell, and told the servant who answered the summons to send Miss Dalrymple to him immediately; and then the two men waited in silence.

With white face and beating heart Sybil descended. Mrs. Dalrymple had been arguing fiercely with her upstairs, and she knew what to expect from her brother. With the instinctive desire for protection, she went straight to Harry when she entered the room.

Without speaking he put his arm round her and drew her close to him, and standing so they confronted Arthur, who found it extremely difficult to speak.

"Sybil, I am very grieved to have to tell you that I have been unable to give my consent to the request that Harry has just made. He is my oldest friend, and you my only sister, you will believe me when I say that I would have done anything to be able to say yes, but I cannot. Believing, as I do, that Harry has embraced a dangerous heresy, I cannot consent to such a union as long as you are under my care. When you are of age you will, of course, be at liberty to please yourself, but I trust that for the present you will agree to my wishes. If it is painful to you, it is also very painful to me; remember, I do not do it with a desire to make you suffer, but because I conceive it to be my duty."

Sybil heard him in silence, then she glanced up into Harry's face before she spoke.

"And so you conceive it to be your duty to

inflict months of misery on me now, and, if possible, to ruin my whole life by preventing me from marrying the man I love," she said at last in a low voice. "If that is what your religion teaches you, I think I will try Christian Science."

"Don't talk like that, Sybil, be reasonable and try to understand. It is for your good I am doing this, for I consider that on it depends your future happiness."

"Don't talk to me of future happiness when you are doing all you can to ruin it. But I don't care what you say, I shall marry Harry in spite of you."

"Not while I am your guardian," said Arthur firmly; "afterwards I cannot, of course, prevent you."

"You will not prevent me now unless I choose."

"I trust Harry to keep his word to me. I have told you my decision, there is nothing more to be said. You are angry now, but later on you will understand. I will leave

Harry to tell what my further wishes are." And Arthur went slowly from the room, and closed the door behind him.

"How can he be such an idiot," exclaimed the girl angrily, "as if I cared that for his authority."

"That is all very well, dearest," said Harry, ruefully, "but he has the authority and we must respect it; after all it is not very long to wait."

"And what are his wishes on the subject meanwhile, pray?"

"There is to be no engagement, no communications, and I am to promise not to try to see you alone, or to meet you anywhere except in the ordinary society way."

Sybil's face fell. "It will be beastly," she said with a catch in her voice, "just when it might have been so heavenly."

"Yes, it is very hard lines, dearest, but I cannot see any alternative as yet. We must not be hard on Arthur, he believes he is doing his duty and that it is for your good; though

why you should be lost if you marry me, I cannot quite see."

"Arthur is blind," said Sybil; "he can only see duty with his mortal eyes, or he would perceive that love, which is the supreme gift of God, is the one thing in the world that is right. If he only knew how much better it would be for me to go out of this atmosphere, which seems to stifle me, and go away with you, he would never refuse his consent. If these good people only knew what harm they do in the name of duty!"

"But we are not going to let him do any harm, sweetheart," said Harry, as he drew her down into Arthur's big armchair; "we are now going to bring all our Christian Science into play to work for harmony, and presently you will see that all will be well."

"And meantime we may not write or meet at all."

"You must go out all you can this winter, little woman, and we'll often meet. Angela and Hugh will befriend us, and perhaps the

time will not seem so very long to us after all."

But though his words were brave enough, Harry was feeling very downhearted. That Arthur would ever give in, he thought highly improbable, and he was very unwilling to carry off Sybil without his old friend's consent. Then there were all the wasted years to make up, and it was hard to have to wait. But patience was, at any rate, one of his virtues, he told himself, as he walked home an hour later; to him the waiting would not be so hard as to the girl, who was young and impetuous; it was for her that he grieved. He was still only a beginner in Christian Science, and it was not until later that he realized all the help he was able to get from his religion, and knew quite confidently that all would indeed be well with them.

XXIII

IT was six months later, and the spring had come once more, after a long and dreary winter.

Angela had been married four months earlier, and had got a flat in town overlooking Kensington Gardens. The night was warm, and she had thrown back the drawing-room windows and stepped out onto the little balcony.

Presently she was joined by Sir Hugh and Arthur. The latter had seen a great deal of Sir Hugh during the past six months. He had been frequently at the flat, partly because he often accompanied Sybil, and partly because there was something in the atmosphere of the home which brought him rest and peace in these days of trouble, and so he had come to look upon it as a sort of haven when the

turmoil of the world seemed more than usually great.

"What a lovely night!" said Hugh, standing by his wife; "I wish we were at Hollydene."

"Yes, so do I," said Angela. "This time last year we had just gone down there. What a lovely time we had!"

"Yes, didn't we? It seems sad to think it is all shut up again."

Before Angela could answer, a servant came in to say someone wanted Sir Hugh, and Angela and Arthur were left together. They drew some chairs up to the window and sat down, and for a little while there was silence, except for the roar of the traffic coming up from the road below.

Angela glanced at her companion, and noticed, as she had often done of late, how much he had altered during the past year. He looked older and more worn; the face was thinner and more ascetic looking than of old, with more lines round the mouth and eyes.

Worry and trouble had undoubtedly set their mark there.

"Arthur," she said suddenly, breaking the silence, "do you remember a conversation we had at Hollydene that morning before you left?"

"Yes, I remember."

"When I had the impertinence to tell you not to worry, but to trust more in God?"

"There was no impertinence."

"I think perhaps there was, but I want to repeat it now. You are worrying about Sybil and Harry, are you not?"

"Yes, I suppose I am."

"I am not at all surprised. You have driven her into the arms of the Scientists, you know. Ever since you forbade her engagement, she has been studying Christian Science whenever she has had the chance, because she declared that Harry's religion made him happy, fearless, free from care, and full of charity, while yours had made you hard and narrow. Of course, she only thought of you in

connection with her engagement. Do you think you were wise to decide as you did?"

"I conceived it to be my duty."

"Because you would not acknowledge that there might be another fold. Tell me, now that you know Hugh so well, have you anything to say against his life and conduct?"

"No, certainly not, his whole life is spent in doing good."

"And what of Harry?"

"I have nothing to say against him."

connection with her engagement. Do you think, Arthur, that you have altogether obeyed the commandment, 'judge not'? Do you think that if you have no fault to find with Harry that you have any right to interfere with Sybil's happiness and his?"

"It seemed to me the only thing to do."

"Because, Arthur, you will not see. Harry is like the man our Lord healed of blindness, who said, 'I only know that whereas I was blind, now I see.' He only knows he has been cured, is there any wonder that he blesses the

means by which he received his strength. Had it been the church who did the work, Harry would have believed in the church; but it was not. Is it fair then, do you think, because your church did not succeed, and Science did, that you should punish Harry for that?"

"You speak as if I were purposely inflicting pain on Harry, whereas I am really only making an effort to protect Sybil."

"Listen, Arthur. Sybil loves Harry, and to her he is, therefore, the one being in the world who counts. Sybil has never known him as anything but an honest, upright man, gentle and patient above the ordinary. Naturally when she is forbidden to marry him by you, she begins to compare the two of you, and since religion is the point on which you are divided, that is the point on which she tries you both. She finds you hard and narrow; I do not say you really are, but to her you must appear so, for you can find no fault in Harry himself, but because he believes something that you cannot, he must not be allowed to en-

ter your family. Then she turns to Harry. He could carry her off and marry her to-morrow if he chose, and might certainly have been pardoned if he had been furious with you. Not a bit of it, he sets himself to wait patiently, though he has already waited for years, poor boy, and because—take note of this, Arthur—because of his religion he believes that it will all come right; and that is what he tells Sybil. So, on the one hand, she sees you hard, narrow, miserable and worried; and, on the other, Harry, gentle, charitable, happy and confident, in spite of everything to make him the reverse; which do you think appears the more attractive to the onlooker?"

Arthur got up and walked about the room.

"Angela, I confess I am desperately worried. When Harry came to me first it seemed to me my duty was clear and that I had no choice but to forbid their union, but since then I have seen Sybil growing farther and farther from me and taking every opportun-

ity to study this Christian Science, and I have been able to do nothing. I have also watched Harry closely and he has won my admiration by his conduct. I confess that I have been struggling with many doubts about my action. I do not see my way as clearly as I did."

"It is the old story, Arthur," said the girl gently; "we are so anxious to find the mote in our brother's eye, that we forget the beam that causes our own blindness. Often, too, I think we try to do that which God alone can do. We forget His promise that if we seek His kingdom first, all the rest will be added. It is the wonderful trust in God that is the great attraction in Christian Science, and that we forget so much in the church to-day. Worry and trust are opposites, they cannot exist side by side, the one destroys the other."

"Yes, that is true. After all, Angela, I think you have got to a height above me, and yet I have presumed to try and alter your faith to suit mine. Once before you told me to

trust God more, and I said I would, but I think I have sadly failed; this time I will see to it that I succeed."

Before Angela could answer, Hugh returned, and the conversation became more general.

. . . . .

The next day Angela received the following note; it began abruptly and had no signature:

"I have done as I promised you, and my eyes are opened, and I see my way clear. This morning I have been to see Harry and have given my consent to his marriage with Sybil, so they are happy. You were right to rebuke me for my want of trust. After I left you last night, I read through the Sermon on the Mount, and the words that were stamped in upon my brain were these, 'By their fruits ye shall know them'; they haunted me, until at last I understood, and the words Harry quoted

to me before came back, 'Other sheep I have which are not of this fold,' and then the promise that followed, to be fulfilled some day, 'There shall be one fold and one Shepherd.'"

THE END